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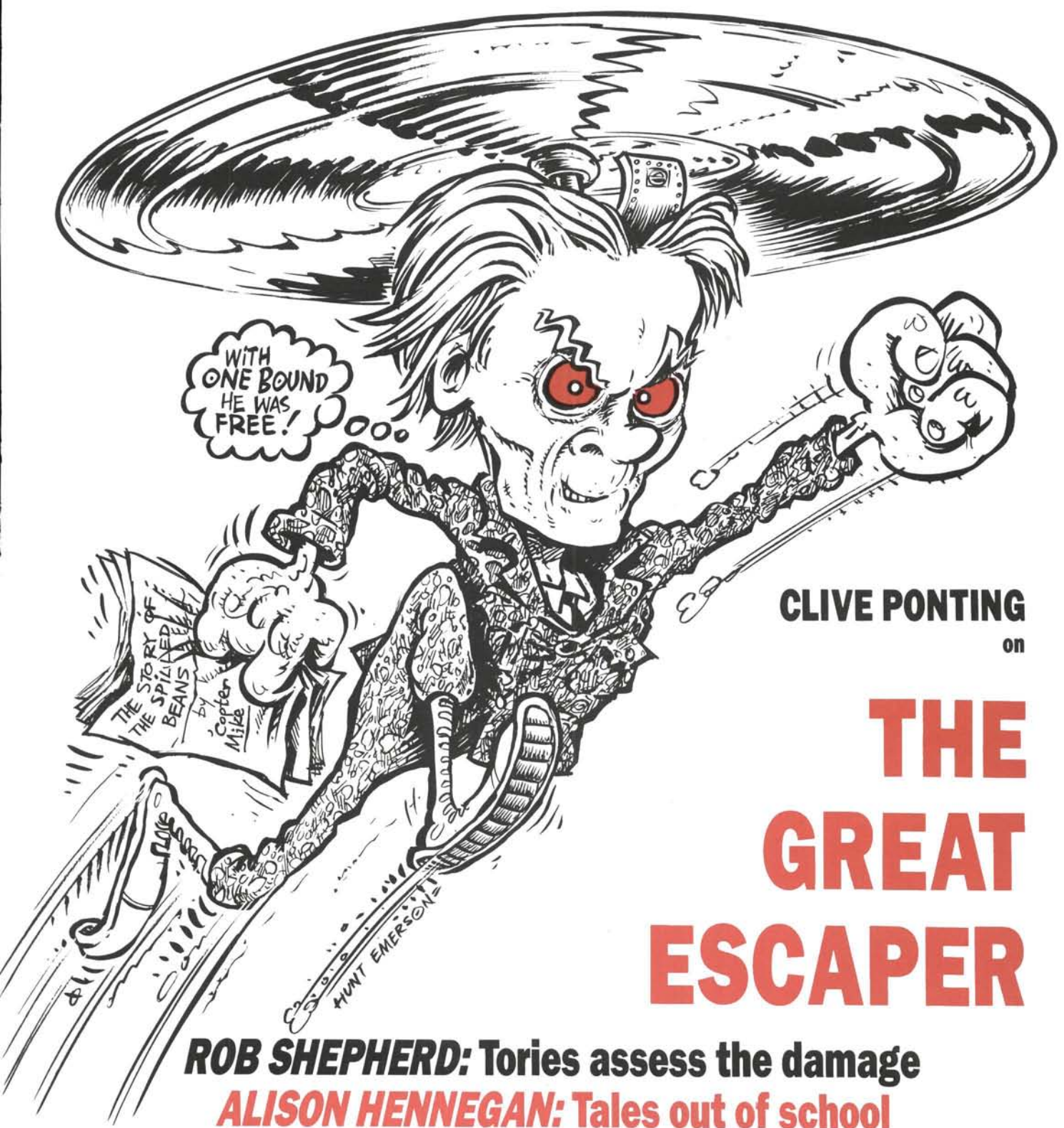
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New Statesman

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CLIVE PONTING
on

THE GREAT ESCAPER

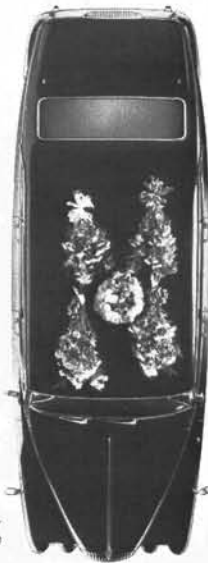
ROB SHEPHERD: Tories assess the damage
ALISON HENNEGAN: Tales out of school
STEVE & NICKIE ROBERTS: On the Soho sex trial

In 1982 London Transport fares were raised by 96 per cent.

As a result a great many people decided to drive their own cars rather than travel by public transport.

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Even though 1982 was the year that seat belts were made compulsory,



subsidies make sound economic sense. But then, so have we.

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WHEN FARES GO UP THE TRAFFIC SLOWS DOWN.

road casualties increased by nearly 4,000 compared to the previous year.

But 1982 was not unique. Almost every fare rise is followed by an increase in casualties on the roads.

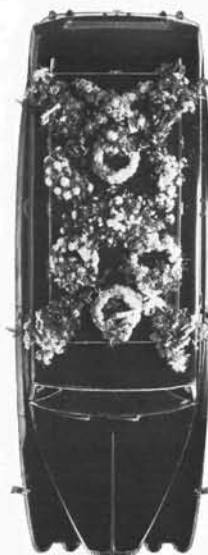
This week the fares on London's buses, tubes and British Rail trains have gone up again.

The extra money will not be used to improve services. It will be used to reduce the level of subsidy that London's transport systems receive from central government.

Yet London already receives less subsidy than most comparable western cities.

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Cover drawing: Hunt Emerson

The Heseltine earthquake
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DAVID CAUTE assesses the degree of Communist Resistance in Nazi Germany

Westland — this one will run and run

ONLY ONE FACT can save Leon Brittan, the Trade and Industry Minister, from resigning over the Westland affair. It is that the Prime Minister herself has been so closely involved in everything that he has said and done in recent weeks that the monkey and the organ grinder are effectively as one.

The picture that was confirmed by the emergency debate on the issue in the House of Commons on Wednesday is of a shabby little affair. Mr Brittan clearly lied to the House of Commons last Monday when he said that he was unaware of any letter from the chief executive of British Aerospace to the government. He could have got away with it if he had limited himself to what he replied directly to Mr Heseltine: 'I have not received any such letter.' But quite gratuitously he went on to say to Dennis Skinner: 'If it helps the member, I am not aware of any letter from Sir Raymond Lygo to anyone else either'. That was an evasion amounting to a lie, but Mrs Thatcher, who had received a letter from Sir Raymond's chairman was sitting by his side and said nothing.

That lie is a question of political style, not of substance and on Wednesday Mrs Thatcher effectively showed that Michael Heseltine's own resignation was over questions of style and not substance. The readiness of this government to lie and to act illegally no longer shocks.

But there are more important questions of substance. They are that the principles of policy that the government has applied to the Westland affair throughout have shown themselves to be totally inadequate.

Their central inadequacy lies in the idea that an issue like the future of Westland is something that 'should be left to the shareholders.' The future of Westland, or even more critically of a company like British Aerospace, depends critically on government procurement policy. The notion that the relation of such companies to government can be like those of corner grocers to their customers is an illusion that explains so many of the mistakes that the Thatcher government has made.

Even the official version of what Leon Brittan said to Sir Raymond Lygo makes it clear that, whatever the public pretence, behind the scenes ministers intervene all the time. If the government really is leaving it to shareholders to decide these critical issues, why did Brittan want to talk to Lygo at all? If the government's policy is one of genuine privatisation, why did Brittan complain that British Aerospace had not consulted with its 'sponsoring department' before going ahead with the European consortium? If the private sector is supposed to know better than government how to manage industrial questions, why did Brittan make it clear to British Aerospace in such strong terms that Sir Raymond felt he needed the 'protection of his board' that what they were doing was not 'in the national interest' and that they should withdraw in order to end Westland's period of uncertainty by letting the Sikorsky plan proceed unopposed?

The answer is that no serious national industrial policy can be conducted in this way. A serious policy needs the coordinated co-operation of sympathetic government, workforces and shareholders. Since we shall not get such a policy from this government, it is an area of politics that should be wide open to socialist initiative.

What a way to run a chunnel

ARE YOU sitting comfortably? Then we'll begin. Once upon a time there were three cross-channel fixed linked schemes. But Goldilocks and Prince Charming (who was though still disguised as a frog) could not agree on which one they liked best.

There was the long, high bridge — so long in fact that many people said that it would be very easy to sabotage and much more difficult to maintain than our existing Severn bridge, which is constantly in need of repair and being closed to traffic. And so high that even in Gales Force 8, let alone Storms Force 10 (which have been known in the English Channel), high sided vehicles would be blown over unless huge perspex sides were added to protect them, though no one knew what the effect of all that wind resistance would be.

And there was the bridge and tunnel, with a bridge going just a little way and with the cars then driving down a spiral ramp that was something half way between a helter-skelter and an NCP multi-storey car park to disappear into a tunnel under the sea and come up via another helter-skelter onto another little bridge on the French side. But, beyond some pretty models and drawings, no one seemed really to have worked out how it would all work and what you would do if a couple of articulated *camions* stalled going *up* a helter-skelter, or which side of the helter-skelter you would drive on.

And then there was the Channel Tunnel itself, which Prince Charming liked because it had all been properly worked out for years and cost less and stood a chance of being completed within budget and on time, but Goldilocks didn't like because only trains would run in the tunnel and Goldilocks didn't like trains . . .

THE HIGH drama of the Westland saga has diverted attention from the government's utter irresponsibility in this much larger industrial decision. The British case against *any* fixed link across the Channel is overwhelming. Massive resources will be invested in the biggest single civil engineering project in this country this century without any proper economic, industrial or social case having been made out for it. The *last* thing that a rational transport policy would want is the artificial diversion of yet more commercial and private traffic through London and the Southeast. No one can forecast accurately what will happen to traffic volumes over the next, say, fifty years. The argument that more roll on-roll off ferries are a

cheaper and more flexible way of being able to cope with shifting patterns of demand is one that ought to recommend itself to a free-marketeer like Mrs Thatcher.

For the French, of course, the position is substantially different. The new link would come up in a depressed industrial area, the Pas de Calais. A great deal of traffic that currently goes through non-French ports would be diverted through that development area. It makes as much sense to French transport and regional policy as it makes idiocy for ours.

But set those fundamental arguments aside. Accept that a fixed link is to be. Even after that, the government's conduct has been impeachably irresponsible. The bones of the story are as follows. There is only one scheme that has any realistic chance of working. It is the Channel Tunnel Group's 'rail only' scheme. It is not the exciting new venture that it is sometimes painted as being, which is precisely why it is the only serious runner. It involves digging a big hole and running trains through it, which people have been doing since the middle of the last century.

The scheme was carefully prepared and was due to be endorsed by the Cabinet in May 1982 — on the day when the news came through that the destroyer *HMS Sheffield* had been sunk in the Falklands. Intense lobbying by the railway industries in both countries eventually succeeded in getting the French to persuade Mrs Thatcher to agree *in principle* to a fixed link and to say so in public.

Mrs Thatcher, however, has a dislike of trains that goes far further than her normal dislike of any industry that operates with powerful trade unions and the reasons for which must lie in some unexplored childhood experience. Perhaps, also, the image of the family in a saloon car — with father at the wheel, mother beside him and the children in the back — *driving* off on their holiday to France is part of the Thatcher picture of the secure family unit as the building block of a sound, employed, property owning society.

BE THAT as it may, Mrs Thatcher's agreement in principle had two conditions attached. The first was that no public money should be involved; the second that cars must be able to drive across without being loaded onto trains.

Condition Number 1 is just a presentation con trick, for of course public money will be involved — directly in building the massive infrastructure of roads and facilities required that will turn much of Kent into a construction site for a decade and more; indirectly through the tax offsets that the companies involved will claim as they account for what they do.

Condition Number 2 is pure prejudice and, as the French are now quite reasonably pointing out, makes the project at worst unworkable, or at best very much more expensive. But on the basis of Condition Number 2 word was sent to Ian McGregor, still then at British Steel, to put in a bid for a steel bridge. That option was eventually laughed away. But options involving direct driving were still required, despite the fact that no road tunnel of anything like such length has ever been attempted, that no one was clear how such a volume of carbon monoxide could be safely extracted from a car tunnel, that a major pile up involving fire in such a tunnel would make anything that has ever happened on a motorway look like a picnic and that tests have shown that it is very difficult for drivers to resist the hypnotic effects of driving in a tunnel for two miles, let alone the 22 miles+ that would be involved here.

But the Prime Minister has plugged on with Condition 2. That is why at the last moment the Channel Expressway Group, headed by the Canadian James Sherwood, has come forward with its hybrid proposal for a tunnel that trains would use some of the time and cars and lorries some of the time.

Mr Sherwood is understandably keen to protect his position as chairman of the newly privatised Sealink, which could have its business slashed by a tunnel. But Mrs Thatcher can only have made French acceptance of this late and unlikely hybrid essential to the project, if secretly she regretted having ever agreed in principle in the first place at all. For it is just a non-runner, a spoiling play. ☐

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JUST
OUT

MAY AND BAKER UNDER FIRE OVER POLLUTION CLAIMS



Alan Stephen

Eels from River Yare show mercury limits twice EEC standards, says FoE

MAY AND BAKER, the multi-national chemicals company, is accused of seriously polluting groundwater around its Norwich agrochemical and pharmaceuticals factory with mercury. According to Friends of the Earth, the city's public water supply could become polluted within a few years. ALAN STEPHEN reports

EXPERTS DIFFER over the possibility of water supply contamination, but FoE have found

that eels in the River Yare contain twice the EEC mercury limit and suspect that the pollution is caused by emissions from the factory via Anglian Water's Whitlingham sewerage works.

There's some evidence for this view. Three years ago, May and Baker were ordered by Anglian Water to stop using a soakaway lagoon from the factory after a little-reported public enquiry uncovered pollution by a complex mixture of organic compounds as well as by heavy metals including mercury and copper. They found that there was 'very significant contamination of groundwater near the river intake to the city waterworks', which was 'a result of activities at May and Baker.'

'Immediate threats'

The authority proposed a pipeline scheme costing at least £4m to safeguard the water from 'dangerous and immediate threats of possibly massive and toxic pollution' from the factory 750 yards away. The pipeline is to be built soon. They also identified other possible causes, including bridge-traffic, a rubbish tip and upstream agricultural activities, although they gave no evidence for these.

FoE's own investigations reveal that the disused soakaway lagoon, which is used by BMX riders and borders a popular footpath, has 200 times the normal level of mercury. They also found that samples of factory roof sludge are 53 per cent mercury. A spokesperson for May and Baker concedes that the alleged levels are 'very high indeed' and if proved the company might have to clean it up. May and Baker are to excavate contaminated soil from the soakaway 'as soon as possible'.

Cancer deaths

Water pollution isn't the only alleged environmental hazard from the plant. Since 1983 five cancer deaths and nine breast tumours have occurred among factory workers. John Hockenfull, regional organiser for the General and Municipal Workers' Union, is worried about the possible effects of 'chemical cocktail' dusts accumulated amongst the 'jungle of pipes' after years of processing varying chemical batches.

The history of allegations has caused May and Baker, in conjunction with the union, to instigate a study by a professor from Birmingham University. But the company tells the NS that the study is an internal affair, and that it

doesn't intend to make the results public. Neither will it give details of the scope of the enquiry; however a company spokesperson has already admitted that the population of 'the whole of Norwich' might need to be studied. He also said that the company undertook normal 'good housekeeping' measures and that the Health and Safety Executive visited the factory on average once a month.

Council 'reassured'

This Tuesday the controversy was discussed at a private meeting called by Norwich city council. FoE, May and Baker, Anglian Water, the Industrial Air Pollution Inspectorate and Factory Inspectorate, trade unions and Public Health Authorities were present. The council felt 'largely reassured' about public safety and there was 'no risk whatsoever' to residents from air pollution. A further meeting in six months would discuss some remaining concerns.

The groundwater beneath the factory was contaminated, the meeting heard. But public drinking water and suppliers to food and drink manufacturers were 'entirely safe'. Anglian Water continued to monitor ground water. The council 'remained disturbed' about information about employee health and safety risks within the factory. May and Baker adhered to government safety levels; those levels might need alteration because of unknown effects of some chemicals. The need for independent inspection remained. The next meeting would 'in particular, discuss management practices and safety levels, and further medical research.'

FoE say their allegations have been insufficiently investigated, and want a public enquiry. ●

Hatton tries on the Benn analysis of electoral failure

HESELTINE'S RESIGNATION last week blew the Liverpool Old Swan by-election right off the front pages — luckily for Labour. In a catastrophic turnaround, the Alliance candidate overturned the Labour majority of over a thousand. Heavy snow didn't prevent a high poll, indicating a definite protest vote against Labour, even though deputy leader Hatton claimed victory since 'despite a biased media campaign against us and character assassinations galore', 2358 people voted Labour. Unfortunately for this analysis, 3313 other voters returned the city's first ever SDP

councillor.

As reported here last week, the campaign's final stages were marked by a 'Jobs for the Boys' scandal over a grant to the Militant-supporting Merseyside Action Group. But with a similar level of electoral flair, the notorious Static Security Force came out on strike three days before the election, stopping bin collection and road-gritting operations. The Force is wholly nominated by Militant-dominated GMB union branch 5. They have been the Tendency's most loyal supporters, but following differences between GMB convenor Ian Lowes and Hatton, they wanted the 35 hour week already given to other GMB workers — and quickly, indicating perhaps their estimate of

the political life-expectancy of Militant politicians in the city.

Broken promises

The following day saw the announcement that the promises made to members of housing co-operatives municipalised when Labour took power in 1983 were to be broken. They wouldn't be able to move into the houses they had designed unless they met the city council's current waiting list criteria.

While the loss was clearly due the anti-Militant backlash, Labour councillor Ann Hollinshead is not a Militant supporter and is popular in the ward. As chair of Merseyside county council's Arts committee, she had overseen an imaginative and generous programme in contrast to the philistinism of the city council. In Liverpool Labour terms her team sent quite strong coded signals with no selling of Militant on the canvass and no Derek Hatton at the election

rally. Unfortunately, the electorate failed to decode the signals.

The implications for the future, however, are not as clear as Liberal leader Trevor Jones pretends. In May, one third of the council come up for election and it would take an even bigger swing for the Liberals to take overall control. But if the district auditor's disqualification is upheld in the courts, it would be a different matter as 48 Labour seats would then come up for re-election.

The Labour Party's NEC investigation is continuing this week, despite the court hearing on the surcharge, and appears to be operating on the principle, reinforced by the election result, that 'if 'twere done 'twere well it were done quickly', to minimise any possible electoral damage. But non-Militant councillors find it galling to see their initial public support being dissipated by the Tendency's activities.

Ian Williams

Peace Protests Roll Call (23)

Total arrested in the UK and Eire since September 1981: 9,952

Arrests to date by location

Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire. 59

11-18.12.85 A total of 59 people were arrested on Salisbury Plain between the time of the Cruise missile convoy leaving Greenham airbase and returning. 14 of these eventually charged and the remaining 45 'warned off'.

SAS Headquarters, Stirling Lines, Hereford. 21

20.12.85 21 Greenham women entered the SAS headquarters to protest about the alleged use of microwave beams by the military at Greenham. All eventually released after questioning.

Faslane submarine base, Nr Helensburgh. 3

24.12.85 3 arrested in red area of base. Dressed as Santas, Mike Hutcheson, Tommy Kelly, and Jenny Mooney climbed over high security fences with the aid of oil drums and ladders which were lying around inside the base. Even though one of them is disabled and has the use of only one arm they managed to enter the 'red area' and board the hunter killer submarine 'Conqueror'. They hung up a stocking containing fruit in another submarine. Once arrested and detained a sentry told one of them that had he gone on to the next bay where the Polaris submarine lay he would have been shot.

ROF Burghfield, Berkshire 15

28.12.85 15 Christian CND members arrested after entering the nuclear bomb plant at Burghfield. Holes were cut in the fence and people entered from different parts of the plant. Following Yorkshire TV's documentary which revealed that cancer levels among children living near Aldermaston Weapons Research Laboratory and ROF Burghfield were above the national average increased actions are anticipated in the coming year at these establishments. Speaking at a church service before protesters entered ROF Burghfield, Father Ruston referred to these shocking revelations and said: 'Plans for nuclear war are made in darkness and secrecy. We have woken up to what is being done in our name'.

USAF Sculthorpe

A Church of England deaconess was one of five anti-nuclear protestors sent to jail by Fakenham magistrates in December for non-payment of fines resulting from a Snowball action at USAF Sculthorpe in the summer. Earlier the same court fined Lord Melchett £50 with £20 costs for the same action.

Greenham Common 128

14-16.12.85. 66 women arrested during the 'Widening the Web' demonstration. 63 charged with trespass and 3 with criminal damage. 37 women were arrested in November and 91 arrested in December all of whom were charged, except for two who were juveniles. The figure of 91 for December includes those who took part in the Web Widening demo.

USAF Mildenhall, Suffolk 4

16.12.85 4 Cambridge women hid for three hours inside the office of a maintenance hanger which contained a C130 transport plane. They were 'discovered' only after friends telephoned security police at a prearranged time. When US security police arrived ten of them stormed into the hanger screaming 'Open the door you fucking bastards!' Instead of entering by the door which was open they smashed in the windows with their guns Rambo fashion and leapt across tables, shouting loudly — glass flying everywhere. One of the women said: 'I dived under the table thinking they were about to open fire.' The security police (who call themselves 'Peacekeepers') dragged them outside and spreadeagled them on the grass further abusing them by calling them 'fucking whores and bitches'. One woman was kicked in the head and when she raised her arms to protect herself had her arms seized and stood on by one of the officers. She was kicked in the crotch and called a 'fucking cunt'. All four were marched to the runway where they were told to lie down while they were searched 'for weapons'. They were subjected to further abuse after being handcuffed, when they started singing and were again kicked and cursed. One woman was picked up by the handcuffs despite screams of pain. Defence Ministry police, obviously concerned by the state in which they found the women, have prepared their own report on the women's treatment and asked them to do the same. They stated that 'further police action' may be taken 'as appropriate' regarding the incident.

● Support comes from unexpected quarters sometimes. A woman arrested during the Web Widening demo at Greenham phoned home to say she was OK. Reversing the charges at a call box near the airbase the operator asked her: 'Were you arrested at Greenham Common?' Surprised, the woman confirmed that she had been. 'Then this call will be free of charge, take your time,' he said.

Please send new information to **Janey Hulme** at the New Statesman

No, we won't scrap nuclear power, says Cunningham

LABOUR'S SHADOW environment minister, Jack Cunningham MP, has disowned the party's new anti-nuclear power policy. In a recent interview with *BNFL News*, the in-house newspaper produced by British Nuclear Fuels plc, he said that he did not expect the conference decision to be included in the next manifesto.

Conference agreed by 3.9 to 2.4 million votes last October to a motion that forthrightly condemned the use of nuclear power and called for 'a halt to the nuclear power programme and a phasing out of all existing plants'. The motion was passed against the advice of the National Executive Committee and did not obtain the two-thirds majority necessary for automatic inclusion in Labour's programme. Recently party anti-nuclear activists have been suspicious that the decision was being deliberately ignored.

Under the headline 'Labour pledge to back nuclear power', the December issue of *BNFL News* reported Mr Cunningham as saying: 'The Labour Party has supported the development of civil nuclear power for decades. One conference decision won't change this and I don't expect



The defiant Mr Cunningham

it to be included in the next manifesto. The Labour Party is in the business of looking for structures to create jobs and investments in Britain. It is not interested in crude political decisions to shut whole industries down.'

Cunningham was bound to have great difficulty in living with the new policy. His Copeland constituency in Cumbria contains BNFL's Sellafield nuclear complex which employs about 10,000 people. His majority over the Conservative candidate at the last election was only 1,800.

Rob Edwards

Long arm of military law extends itself

YOU COULD BE forgiven for not knowing that the Armed Services Bill is in Committee. This little-known bill, which is renewed every five years, governs military discipline, both in Britain and abroad. As usual, its second reading went through on the nod.

This year, however, the bill extends the scope of military discipline over the children of servicemen overseas. Now, children over 15, instead of 18 as at present, will fall to be tried by a court martial.

Currently a child accused of a serious offence will be sent home and tried by a juvenile or other court, with full access to legal aid and welfare services. Commanding officers overseas, however, are under no obligation to use welfare services in trying these young people.

'At Ease', a group that lobbies on behalf of servicemen, is also concerned about the rights of their wives overseas. Women directly accused of a crime come under the jurisdiction of a court martial. Rights of access to legal aid and thus a civilian solicitor are at the discretion of the commanding officer, who is frequently among the judges.

The bill also deals with the rights of

servicemen wanting to return early to civilian life. It is widely believed — that soldiers can 'buy themselves out' at any time. In fact, this applies only to those over 21. Boys of 16 who join can opt to leave only within the first six months. Those who join at 18 must opt out during their shorter initial training period.

Polly Woolley

Plods seize more gay mags

JUST days after the New Statesman proved (cover story 13 December 1985) that Tory sponsors of the new Obscene Publications Bill (second reading 24 January) object particularly to gay culture, Kensington police raided a London gay pub's internal shop, Clone Zone, and removed gay magazines openly available at newsagents.

The raid on Brompton's Earls Court Rd, by five police, was at 7.45 pm on 16 December. Copies of Zipper, Mister, John Antony and other magazines were removed, apparently for submission to Scotland Yard's Obscene Publications department. No charges have yet been brought. Gay publications 'are not singled out', says the Yard.

Andrew Lumsden



JUST ANOTHER LOAD . . . yes it's that nuclear convoy again (see NS 29 November). This time we present an exceptionally clear picture of two 'load carriers', with a third in the background — these are the vehicles that carry the bomb — taken at the Deputy Dawg Transport cafe on the A25, just outside Bury St. Edmunds.

The 'Deputy Dawgs' of Bristol, the Avon and Somerset Constabulary are still mounting an Official Secrets Act investigation into the sources of the November article. When questioned this week about the police progress Mr Sharples, Deputy Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset, would only say: 'The enquiry has not been completed. When it is, it [a report] will be forwarded to the DPP in the normal manner.'

Bill Peden

Westland helicopters foisted on reluctant Indians

THE WESTLAND FURORE took a new turn this week when Yeovil MP Paddy Ashdown hit out at the way £65 million of government assistance is being channelled into the helicopter company based in his constituency.

The Overseas Development Administration is paying the full cost of an Indian order for 21 W30 helicopters, which are to be used by India's off-shore oil industry. The deal will use up a quarter of Britain's aid to India for the next two years.

'It's typical of this Government to have sought to provide essential support for a British firm out of the aid budget', thundered Ashdown. 'It shows their contempt for British industry, as well as for aid and world development.'

It's no secret that the Indian order took nearly 18 months to confirm

because of Prime Minister Mr Rajiv Gandhi's reluctance to accept the W30s. Gandhi, himself a former pilot, felt the machines, developed from a military version, were too large and too costly to operate.

But last year Overseas Aid Minister, Mr Tim Raison, threatened that if the Indians refused the Westland deal, they could lose the £65 million in aid altogether. Confirmation finally came on Christmas Eve as a welcome present for Westland employees.

'There are good reasons for exporting these helicopters on development grounds,' claimed Ashdown. But India's poor are unlikely to benefit from the arrangement. Mr John Mitchell, director of the World Development Movement, described it as 'a disgraceful misuse of Aid money'.

John Tanner

Tory 'economic logic' — the truth revealed!

THIS is what the government means by health service 'efficiency': closing hospitals, giving grants to private operators to open private nursing homes and then paying through social security for benefit claimants to stay in them.

Hopfield hospital at Portrush in Northern Ireland closed three years ago despite a fervent local campaign desperate to keep it open. Last June a private nursing home opened on the site, with the aid of an £83,196 government grant.

Its 29 rooms are full and there's already a waiting list, although charges are £195 per week. Some of

the patients — mostly geriatric — are on supplementary benefit and the DHSS pays £170 of the weekly charge, leaving relatives and friends to find the other £25.

The home is very popular with the local community, according to Mr Teddy Doherty, its administrator, and has been welcomed by the local *Coleraine Chronicle*.

The Hopfield Private Nursing Home, a profit-making partnership, got its grant from the Department of Trade and Industry partly because it created 30 jobs — 'more than anyone in Portrush can remember', says Doherty — although the closure of the NHS hospital lost about the same number of jobs in the first place.

According to Mr Doherty: 'Local people are not very happy with the NHS at the moment because of the cutbacks.' He and his partners are 'happy to fill a need'.

John Rentoul

MISCELLANY

A nasty attack

Although editors of newspapers aren't usually appointed for their ability to spell, they do tend to get inordinately pleased with themselves when they discover people who can't. Such is the case with Mr Peter Preston of the *Guardian*, who was last week gloating over a letter from Neil Kinnock. Kinnock was complaining about an article by Anthony Barnett, and wrote in describing him as 'the billious Mr Barnett'. The effect was rather spoiled by the spelling mistake, and Preston took great pleasure in correcting it. Such joy there has been at 119 Farringdon Road this week.

His first resignation

At the press conference last week to announce his bid for the leadership of the Conservative Party, Michael Heseltine wore his Guards tie. And no doubt thus added 1 per cent to his opinion poll rating. However, he was in the Welsh Guards for only nine months, and was one of the last to use the 'Paragraph 672' loophole to get out. In 1959 the only way to get out of National Service was to fight a parliamentary election, and there was much muttering at the time about 'ungentlemanly' persons opting out of the services to fight by-elections in droves. Heseltine, of course, resigned his commission to fight a general election as an official Conservative candidate — but for the hopeless seat of Gower in South Wales.

Magnificent obsessions

From the sticks-and-stones department: in a recent US television debate on terrorism, NS correspondent Claudia Wright was attacked by Arnaud De Borchgrave, editor of the *Washington Times*, who described the NS as a 'notorious left-wing magazine.' Claudia retorted: 'The Statesman doesn't take money from the Koreans — unlike you, Mr De Borchgrave' — a reference to the fact that the *Washington Times* is owned by Sun Myung Moon, the Korean Moonie leader whom the US imprisoned for tax evasion. Not long after, De Borchgrave returned to the theme in an interview with a US newspaper. He claimed that he'd told Ben Bradlee, editor of the *Washington Post*: 'We all know who my new bosses are, but do you have the same luxury?' This cryptic remark harks back to one of De Borchgrave's long-running obsessions: when he was employed by *Newsweek* (owned by the *Post*), he invented a 'KGB disinformation plot' to explain why his maniacally right-wing copy kept getting spiked. It led to him being sacked, but the *Post* agreed to say that he left voluntarily on condition that De Borchgrave would shut up about the KGB. (See NS 1 May 1981). He now seems to have forgotten his side of the

deal. But his resentment against all and sundry is understandable. On every 25 cent newspaper that he sells, he loses one dollar.

Gift to the Nation

What could possibly induce Mrs Thatcher to take time off from the red boxes to sit stock still for twelve hours? Why, having her portrait painted. A giant-sized oil-painting of Mrs T has just been completed for the Northwood naval headquarters. It shows her — and this was apparently her idea — studying charts of the



Falklands war, surrounded by deferential chiefs of staff. She herself is shown 'staring romantically into the middle distance'. The artist, Brenda Bury, discovered while chatting to the PM that she reveres Lord Nelson, and obligingly painted his crest into the background. Ms Bury also dashed off another portrait, showing Mrs Thatcher 'much younger and prettier' which has been presented to Downing Street. We can only hope she follows the example of one of her other heroes, and lets Denis burn it.

Old Lady's new trip

Last week we reported on the miserliness of the Bank of England towards its former employees. Life, however, is a very different story if you're a director; largesse simply pours forth, as David Walker, head of the Bank's Industrial Division has discovered. He's concerned that those aged industrialists that come to him for love and money shouldn't have to tax their corpulent frames by walking up three flights of stairs to his office. So, at a cost of circa £300,000 he is having his own personal lift shaft sunk. We at the NS think this is a fine way to spend taxpayers' money. Indeed we suggest that all former JMB directors be set to work on this worthwhile project.

To see ourselves . . .

Nice to get things in perspective sometimes. Monday's International Herald Tribune sums up the Westland affair in a headline on page two: 'A "Piddling Affair" Trips Up Thatcher'.



LEST WE FORGET

Fifteen months after the flotation of British Telecom, Director of Public Prosecutions Sir Thomas Hetherington still hasn't taken any action. City tycoons Phil Harris and Gerald Ronson will be relieved, reports
PATRICK FORBES

BOTH men were named in a report sent to the DPP last October by Stock Exchange officials investigating possible irregularities in dealings in BT shares shortly after privatisation.

When BT was privatised the limit on individual share applications was set at 800 shares. Harris, millionaire chairperson of carpets firm Harris Queensway, managed to acquire and sell 237,500 BT shares within weeks of the flotation, netting him a £120,000 profit.

The shares were originally bought by the National Insurance and Guarantee Corporation, a subsidiary of Ronson's privately owned Heron International, in its capacity as an underwriter to the BT flotation.

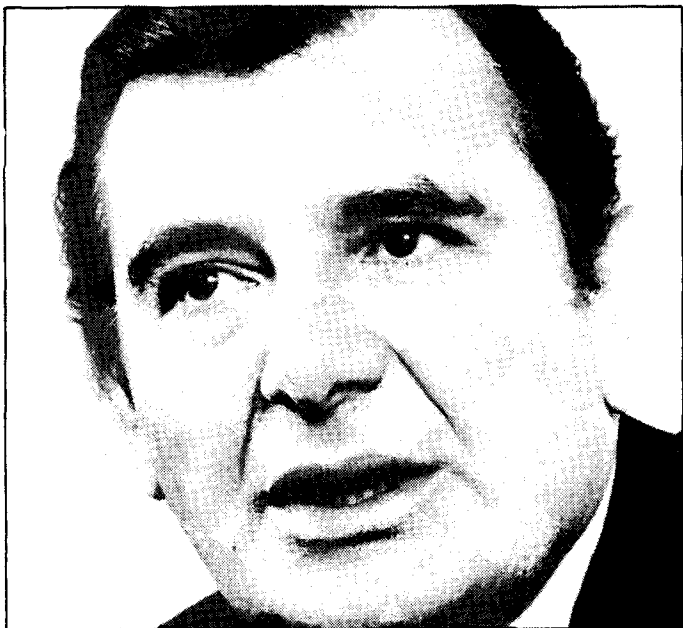
They were then sold by the corporation in *Harris's name* — the first 137,500 shares going early in

December 1984, less than a week after dealings in BT shares officially opened, the next 100,000 shares in early January 1985.

Interest was aroused both by the fact that Harris's holdings comfortably exceeded the 800 share maximum applicable when shares first went on offer, and that there appears to be no record of him buying large amounts of BT shares through official Stock Exchange channels after the BT flotation, either from National Insurance Guarantee or from other sources. Harris said: 'My personal dealings in the shares of British Telecom have been conducted entirely properly.'

A spokesperson for the DPP could only say, last week: 'Cases like this are extremely difficult; it will be some time before anything happens.' We would have thought the matter was essentially quite simple.

Harris and Ronson are by no means the only City slickers involved. Stock Exchange investigators confirmed last August that a senior partner in one stockbroking firm had put in multiple applications. And the report sent to the DPP covered at least eight 'syndicates' which organised large-scale multiple applications.



Gerald Ronson: what was his role?

Outside Britain's Bomb

LOCAL PEOPLE want a public inquiry into 'clusters' of childhood cancer and leukaemia around Ministry of Defence nuclear weapons factories at Aldermaster and Burghfield, near Reading. The cancer cases and problems with safety at MoD establishments were reported on Yorkshire TV's documentary 'Inside Britain's Bomb' last month and in the *New Statesman* (6 December 1985).

At a packed meeting in Burghfield village hall last week, local residents set up a group called Community At Risk from the Environment (CARE), and despite reassurances from Aldermaster's Director of Safety Bill Saxby overwhelmingly called for a more detailed investigation.

Local MP Michael McNair-Wilson (Conservative) was asked to support an inquiry, but refused on the grounds that an official inquiry — the Oxford University Study by Paula Cook — is already underway. But this study, funded by the National Radiological Protection Board, covers the whole country and its local detail falls far short of CARE's demands. It may or may not confirm Yorkshire TV's findings, but it won't satisfy local pressure for a full examination of local factors as least as thorough as the Black Report on the Windscale area.

Saxby told the meeting that since 1955 'every square millimetre' of Aldermaster had been opened to inspection by the Health and Safety Executive — 'in the health and safety field there are very few restrictions under the Official Secrets Act, except for one or two items which I won't go into...'

Martin Bond

What it is to be British

THOUSANDS of British citizens with full right of abode in Britain are being kept waiting abroad for months, according to Home Office-funded UK Immigrants' Advisory Service. The cases are mainly children in the Indian subcontinent.

The UKIAS annual report, published this week, claims that appeals against refusal of an entry clearance sometimes show that the children are not only 'related as claimed' to men resident in Britain but actually themselves British citizens by descent, which means that they are entitled to enter and leave Britain as they please.

But, according to the UKIAS, the Consular sections of British embassies are taking several months to issue passports.

Last year the *New Statesman*

revealed that queues were being used deliberately as a 'primary' control on immigration (Miscellany, 15 February 1985) — supported by leaked documents published in the *Guardian* the following month.

But British citizens are not immigrants — the delay in these cases is caused by the Consular and not the immigration sections of embassies — and they have already proved their entitlement to be in Britain.

The families have been caught in a double bind: a case two years ago held that the children shouldn't be issued with entry clearances because as British citizens they're not subject to immigration control; while immigration officers in Britain have refused to accept that they are British citizens unless they have passports. But a test case last month found that they were entitled to come here with or without passports, and if refused entry at a port of entry could have their appeal heard while still in this country.

But — unsurprisingly — many families are still not prepared to take this risk. The UKIAS is unwilling to estimate the numbers of people involved, but tells us that it's thousands rather than hundreds, and that much of its work now is taken up with these cases.

Jolyon Jenkins

Observer or participant?

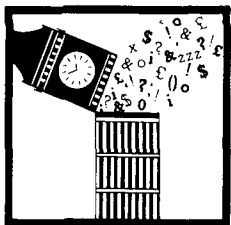
Observer readers may have noticed a big front page story last Sunday which revealed — wait for it — that Mark Thatcher visited Brunei some time ago. Why was the story there? Who was the 'staff reporter' who wrote it? Observer staff were tight lipped and red faced.

Observer journalists seem embarrassed at being involved in proprietor 'Tiny' Rowland's battle with Mohamed Al-Fayed, the Egyptian who succeeded where Rowland was prevented from taking over Harrods, the top people's shop. Rowland has been pestering Norman Tebbit and his successor at Trade and Industry Leon Brittan with long letters denouncing Al-Fayed, mainly for being foreign, which his newspaper prints in full.

The *Observer* scoop failed, however, to mention that Rowland was going to sue Al-Fayed for defamation in the US the next day, over an interview in the *Washington Post* in which he was described as the 'Al Capone of the City'. This evens the score, as Al-Fayed has a libel action outstanding against the *Observer*, for suggesting that he and his brothers were 'fronting' for the Sultan of Brunei when they bought Harrods.

Our call to *Observer* editor Donald Treford, seeking the identity of the 'staff reporter', has alas not been returned.

John Rentoul



Heseltine confirms what voters already knew about Thatcher

AT THE HEART of the rows that have enveloped the government since Michael Heseltine's resignation last week is a paradox. The former Defence Secretary has claimed to have been the victim of a sudden and unprecedented 'breakdown of constitutional government'. It is necessary to his argument to assert that until last month Mrs Thatcher had acted with complete propriety on all occasions, for if Heseltine had spotted her behaving badly on any previous occasion he should have resigned then. After all, cancelling a cabinet committee meeting in order to avoid being outvoted may be a minor foul by the Prime Minister, but it is not a major crime — worth, say, a free kick rather than a sending off.

Yet the political impact of Heseltine's accusations flows not from the shock of his revelations but from the confirmation that he has provided of what most people suspected all along. It is a familiar enough technique in investigative journalism: the stories that have the greatest effect tend not to be those that overturn ingrained public perceptions, because initial reactions tend to be sceptical (remember how the *Sunday Times* was laughed out of court over the Hitler diaries fiasco well before it was proved that they were forgeries?).

Instead, it is those stories that confirm existing suspicions that cause the greatest stir. Again, to take an example from the *Sunday Times*: when the paper disclosed the connections between the mineworkers' leaders and the Libyan regime, the damage done to Arthur Scargill's cause stemmed from the detailed documentation of what many people believed all along — that Scargill had some dodgy allies.

If Heseltine truly believes that until last month Thatcher enshrined the virtues of collective cabinet decision taking, that she listened attentively to her colleagues and that she counted heads before yielding to the freely-expressed will of the majority, then he is in a small minority of the public who thinks all that. Almost two years ago — in April 1984 — a Harris poll for the *Observer* found that 63 per cent thought that Thatcher 'refuses to listen to advice' and that 62 per cent agreed that 'she acts too much like a dictator'.

I daresay those figures would be higher if the same questions were asked today. But the essential point remains that the gravity of the crisis facing Thatcher flows from the specific evidence confirming that she really does act like a dictator and refuses to listen to advice. We find ourselves in roughly the same position as John Kennedy was in relation to the American economy when he became President. Asked what was his greatest

shock on reaching the White House, he replied: 'It was finding out that things really were as bad as we had been saying during the campaign'.

The evidence of the opinion polls since the Falklands War is not that many people believed that Thatcher respected collective cabinet decision taking, but that the benefits of her autocratic style outweighed its costs. The Falklands War itself exemplified this trade-off: the decision to send the task force — and having sent it to insist that it recapture the islands, come what may — was her decision, and seen to be her decision. At no stage did the cabinet come to a collective view before a decision was taken. On the odd occasion when dissent surfaced (for example when Francis Pym, as Foreign Secretary,

preventing discussion of the substantive issues by the full cabinet; and to be *tough* — by sitting quiet on the Commons front bench on Monday afternoon and concealing the existence of the letter she had received from Sir Austin Pearce, chairman of British Aerospace.

We are left with a picture of unredeemed shabbiness — a picture confirmed by Number Ten's hole-in-the-corner responses to Heseltine's allegations. Where he has been explicit, she has been coy. Where he has appeared before the cameras, almost continuously, and quoted names, dates and facts, she has left her response (until this Wednesday's debate) to be given in non-attributable lobby briefings by Bernard Ingham.

PETER KELLNER

warned that sinking an Argentinian warship on the high seas might be illegal), the dissidents were swiftly overruled.

EVEN BEFORE the Westland row blew up, Thatcher's reputation was waning. At the time of the last election, MORI found that 62 per cent regarded her as a 'capable leader'. By last October, that figure had fallen to 39 per cent. The numbers saying she 'understands the problems facing Britain' had fallen even faster — from 47 to 18 per cent.

Last month a Gallup survey found that Thatcher was seen far more than the other party leaders as 'tough' and 'determined'. But she lagged well behind Kinnock, Steel and Owen on other qualities. Only 12 per cent said she 'listens to reason' (Kinnock scored 46 per cent) and just 9 per cent said she was 'likeable as a person' (Kinnock: 49 per cent).

Part of Thatcher's response has been to soften her image. She has been coached to seem more caring and conciliatory on television. But this can be a damage limitation exercise at best. Her main task is to persuade voters that her perceived virtues — strength, determination and toughness — are more important than her perceived defects — her authoritarianism and her distaste for listening to advice. In her speech to the House of Commons on Wednesday afternoon she failed.

What Heseltine's disclosures have done, by confirming the darkest public suspicions about the Prime Minister's character, is to amplify her defects while undermining her virtues. She has been shown to be *strong* — by ordering the cancellation of a cabinet committee meeting where she risked defeat; to be *determined* — by

IT MAY be that a full disclosure of all the cabinet documents concerning the Westland affair will show Heseltine's account to be selective and distorted. Indeed, Heseltine's attacks on CND at the time of the last general election and on Clive Ponting after his acquittal were notable for their dishonesty. But until Thatcher provides an account of the last three months' events as detailed as Heseltine's (and more plausible than his), her public reputation is bound to remain tarnished.

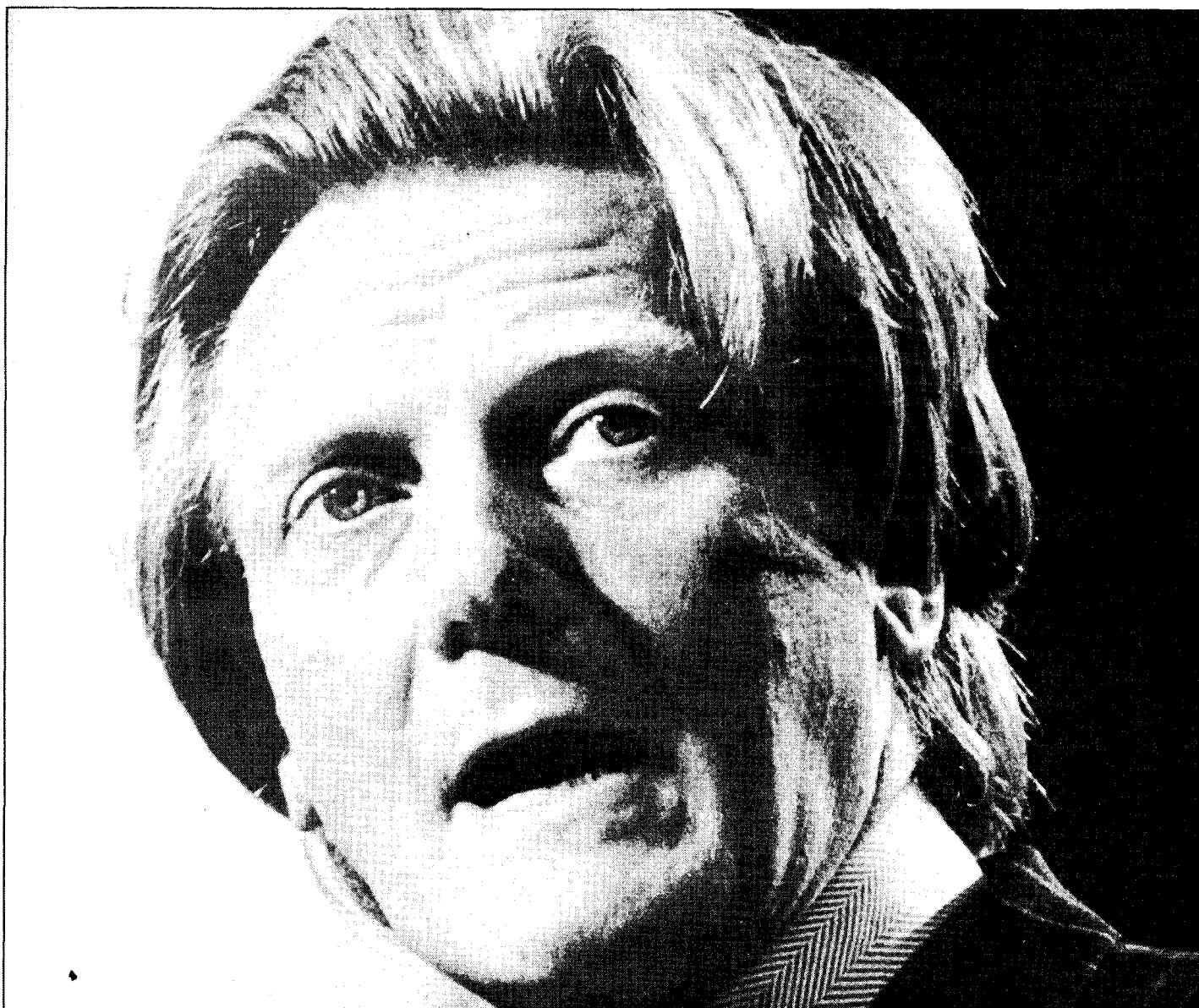
Two kinds of event could now come to Thatcher's rescue. One is a Falklands-style *deus ex machina*, in the form of a stark, simple challenge for her to face, cheered on by the great majority of the electorate. But all the obvious bogeys are too quiet for her comfort. Arthur Scargill is still nursing his wounds and trying to prevent the miners' union from declining into impotence. The Common Market is too busy absorbing Spain and Portugal to provoke a row with Britain. Iceland shows no signs of planning to invade Rockall (the scenario offered by Ned Sherrin in the *Metropolitan Mikado*, whereby the Tories remained in power for ever — and Michael Heseltine became Prime Minister).

The other chance Thatcher has for reviving her reputation would be the success of Nigel Lawson's economic policies — not just lower inflation, but falling unemployment, tax cuts and cheaper mortgages. Last week the signs pointed the other way: interest rates rose and, within minutes of Heseltine's resignation, the Department of Employment published figures showing that unemployment had started to rise again.

As he surveys the government's discomfiture this week, Neil Kinnock is likely to be a happy man. But David Steel and David Owen, I suspect, have reason to be even happier. □

THE SYNTHETIC INDIGNATION OF A FLASHY POLITICIAN

It looks like no accident, says CLIVE PONTING, that Michael Heseltine picked up his marbles on 9 January just as the defence budget is threatened with major cuts



Chris Davies/Network

ONE OF THE highlights for the audience of the circus performance put on by politicians is seeing the tables turned on one of the participants. Michael Heseltine has been in that undignified position in the last week.

The man who was never reluctant to attack those who opposed him now complains about character assassination by his erstwhile 'colleagues' in the Cabinet. The man who ensured that Sarah Tisdall was prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act and who insisted on my prosecution now has a different attitude. Immediately after his resignation he felt free to 'leak' details of Cabinet meetings

and discussions only days after they happened. And he has also found himself on the end of some other damaging leaks, probably from his ex-Cabinet colleagues, including one letter written by the Solicitor-General apparently leaked two hours after it was sent. The man who was incredulous that I should argue that a civil servant could have any higher loyalty than to the interests of the government in office now announces that his loyalty to the country is greater than his loyalty to the Prime Minister.

The man who was expert at Whitehall infighting now expresses disgust at the

'unconstitutional' behaviour by the Prime Minister. Any observer of the Whitehall scene knows that his indignation at the internal proceedings of the Thatcher government is synthetic. The picture he paints of brutal inter-departmental disputes, meetings held with opponents excluded, meetings not held at all when the Prime Minister is likely to lose, doctoring of the minutes of meetings and Ministers using the lobby to spread damaging stories about their colleagues is the stuff of everyday life in Whitehall and has gone on under every government.

To those who worked with him, Heseltine's

resignation did not come as a surprise. He is not a deep thinker at home with the intricacies of policy debates. His reaction to issues is instinctive and mercurial at best. His strengths as a politician come from his energy and his flair for self-publicity. He has shown all these strengths and weaknesses since 1979.

He was never a true believer in either Thatcherite economics or foreign policy. He disguised this well at the Department of the Environment by concentrating on that other Thatcherite obsession — kicking the bureaucracy. His system for attacking inefficiency, known as MINIS, was not revolutionary and was itself a great generator of paper and unnecessary forms. He even introduced a system where no photocopying could be done without a form filled in and signed in duplicate, thereby creating even more paper. At the Department of the Environment he may have shown his energy after the Toxteth riots but he also managed to get out before some of the worst consequences of his policies came home to roost and the luckless Patrick Jenkin was left to try and clear up the mess.

Heseltine arrived in Defence in 1983 and was soon followed by the most unpopular Minister in the government, John Stanley. The Department of the Environment had held a series of celebration parties when he left. Heseltine's first task was to take on CND in the run up to the general election. He set up an anti-CND propaganda unit, Defence Secretariat 19, staffed by ordinary civil servants and paid for by the public. Just the sort of behaviour that the government is about to ban in the case of local councils. According to former MI5 officer Cathy Massiter he also used information from MI5 about CND for party political purposes in violation of MI5's charter. DS 19 was disbanded almost immediately after the election.

After the election Heseltine was left with a problem; how to keep in the public eye. Once cruise missiles were deployed at Greenham Common the media lost interest in the issue. A Defence Review was ruled out, mainly because his predecessor John Nott had had one, and a Tory government which was supposed to be increasing defence spending could not have them too often. So he fell back on that old favourite — reorganising the Ministry of Defence.

WHEN HE ARRIVED at Defence Heseltine brought with him his beloved MINIS with all its masses of paperwork and form filling. Getting to grips with the labyrinthine structure of Defence with its incessant battles between those deadly rivals the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force, proved to be much more difficult than grappling with the more gentlemanly world of Environment. Heseltine is not good at getting through the masses of paper produced by the bureaucracy and taking decisions.

Indeed at one point the Permanent Secretary, Sir Clive Whitmore, had to see Heseltine and give him a long list of papers that had been waiting in his 'in-tray', often for many months, for him to make a decision. Military equipment projects even had a special Heseltine delay factor built into their timescales. Heseltine plunged ahead with his

reorganisation long before the MINIS work was completed. One of the jobs specifically mentioned in his White Paper for abolition had never even been subjected to a MINIS review.

Later in 1984 came the appointment of Peter Levene as Chief of Defence Procurement at twice the salary of the civil servant who had

'At the Department of the Environment . . . he managed to get out before the worst consequences of his policies came home to roost'

been doing the job. The way in which the appointment was made was illegal, as the Prime Minister had to admit to the House of Commons three months later, and it has been heavily criticised by the Public Accounts Committee.

1984 was also the year of the Belgrano affair when Heseltine was caught out misleading a Select Committee at the end of a long and sordid cover-up. This should have come as no surprise since Heseltine was, as a junior minister back in 1973, also caught out giving misleading answers to Parliament in the Tracked Hovercraft affair. Even after my unanimous acquittal by the Old Bailey jury, he produced, in the subsequent Parliamentary debate, a highly misleading account of what had happened inside Whitehall, in an attempt to defend his record.

The Westland affair has all the hallmarks of a typical Heseltine performance. He seems to have come to the issue very late and then gone

overboard in spectacular fashion in the last few weeks. In the summer of 1985 he seemed content to let Westland sort themselves out. No orders were placed for helicopters. Heseltine on *TV Eye* last week appeared to argue that it was 'not thinkable' to place the orders, because the Chiefs of Staff did not want the aircraft and he had no power to order them to take the planes. Exactly what the Chiefs of Staff wanted is not known but it is certainly not true to say that the Secretary of State for Defence is unable to order particular equipment to be bought. It happens regularly every year as a balance is struck between what the military want and what British industry can supply.

Although Heseltine may have been trying to repeat his success with the European fighter aircraft in the Westland affair, his European credentials are not unsullied. Only a couple of months ago he negotiated the SDI technology deal with Weinberger. But this time the United States, in the shape of Sikorsky, had to be excluded. The Westland affair looks more like a part of Heseltine's long term political plans. His driving force is personal ambition and he may have concluded that Mrs Thatcher was unlikely to promote him any further and that his best chance of gaining the leadership was to go now and bank on replacing Thatcher after a Tory defeat in the next general election.

Another factor in the resignation may well have been the impending problems inside the Ministry of Defence. Following the spending cuts announced by Lawson in the autumn the latest reports suggest that the Defence Budget is in serious trouble. It may be as much as £1 billion a year over the money the Cabinet have decided to provide. Major and highly public cuts are probably inevitable which will be a highly embarrassing exercise for a Tory government just before an election.

Heseltine may have decided to clear off and leave the problems for poor George Younger to sort out. The political circus is certainly not an edifying spectacle. □

HESELTINE EARTHQUAKE — 2

THE POLITICAL LAVA BOILS ROUND MAGGIE

As Heseltine plans a major round of speeches, ROB SHEPHERD plots the new Tory leadership stakes

HOW IRONIC that most accounts of the events leading to Michael Heseltine's mid-Cabinet explosion should sound like the classic scenario for a nuclear nightmare — minor conflict which few notice, escalation, entrenched positions taken up, one side warns that it's on the brink. Then a miscalculation by the other side: its bluff is called. And bang!

But what is the political fall-out for the Tories from their 'Big H' bomb — as Tory Whips fight to calm unsettled nerves?

As Tories re-assembled at Westminster this

week, it was acknowledged that with Heseltine's departure — whatever the merits or demerits of his cause — 'nothing will be the same again'. There was a mood of foreboding on the backbenches. 'We needed Michael's going like a hole in the head'. Tuesday's London *Standard* MORI poll put Labour five points ahead — and polling was conducted before Heseltine's resignation.

The key fact is that the question of the Tory leadership is now in the spotlight. Heseltine's best chance — some would say his only chance

— of grabbing the leadership is if Thatcher is forced to go before the next election. He is the only serious contender who has had the courage to take her on. But many Tories would opt for 'safety first', drafting in Sir Geoffrey Howe as caretaker. Heseltine's flamboyance would count against him. He is the Quinton Hogg, now Hailsham, of his day — his mace-waving is quoted against him, in the way that Hailsham never lived down his impulsive Tory Conference bell-ringing.

Yet Heseltine is the first Minister to return to the backbenches who is clearly a player in the Thatcher succession. He is the first of the next generation to go, unlike the Stevases, Gilmours, Priors and Pymms, who had been on the party's inside track before Thatcher's hijack in 1975. And unlike them, he has the sheer 'oomph' to mount the challenge. 'He can speak a bit as well', as one concerned MP observed.

It is also feared that Heseltine has revived the TBW ('That Bloody Woman') factor. One Minister admits 'Heseltine has exposed the way she runs the government'. Another confesses 'this is her normal method of doing business'. Perhaps the most damning confirmation that Heseltine's allegations ring true came from — of all places — the *Daily Telegraph*: 'He is not the only Conservative for whom the Prime Minister has been too absolute, too intolerant and excessively imperious. The government is less secure, less happy about itself than most people suppose. There is blood on the moon and Mrs Thatcher must try to wipe it off'.

No one at Westminster can have failed to hear the moans from all quarters of the government at the way Thatcher habitually treats, or mistreats, her Ministers. Other issues on which she is said to have imposed her personal preference over reluctant Ministers are now likely to dribble out. They include her refusal to countenance an earlier settlement in the 1981 civil servants' strike, her insistence that the ceiling for mortgage interest tax relief be increased from £25,000 to £30,000 in the 1983 Budget, and the pledge to abolish the GLC and Metropolitan Counties which was shoved into the 1983 manifesto at the last minute.

Before Heseltine's walk-out 'lack of direction' had been the common backbench grumble. The 1983 manifesto had been bland and a policy vacuum had developed. Thatcherism had waned, for which the Wets and Biffen-like consolidators were grateful. But it was becoming harder to resolve policy.

IT IS THIS POLICY VACUUM which a senior figure like Heseltine, freed from the Cabinet, now has the chance to fill. He plans, in a couple of months, to embark upon a series of set-piece speeches. His focus will be the problems of the inner-cities, housing, industrial policy, defence and his opposition to the Treasury line. He is a long-standing interventionist on the economy and has liberal credentials on race and law and order. His roughing-up of CND went down well with the Wets, who tend to be as hardline as any diehard Tory on defence.

There is no shortage of issues for him to pick, where policy either has to be resolved, or where rows already loom: what to do now

about unemployment, what to do on the economy, if falling oil revenues rule out tax cuts, Fowler's social security reform, and the proposal to replace the domestic rate by a poll-tax, which MPs expect to be announced at the end of next week.

Heseltine's speeches in the country mean, in the words of one of his associates, that 'he will do a Ted'.

But isn't 'doing a Ted' what he should avoid, conjuring up as it does in the Tory Party allegations of disloyalty and putting personal ambition before party? The great problem for Heseltine is the peculiar nature of the beast which is the Conservative Party. Its *raison d'être* is to hold office. Its tribal instinct is survival. Loyalty is its chief instrument. And the leader is the focus for that loyalty.

'Loyalty is only the means to an end. That's why a losing leader is ditched so fast'

Loyalty, however, is only the means to the end. That's why a losing leader is ditched so fast. But as the winner of two out of two elections, the cry of 'TBW' would need to reach a crescendo before Thatcher would be packed off to Dulwich. Time is also short to start calling in the removal vans, with some senior Tories looking to an election in the spring or early summer of next year.

An election defeat, and Thatcher has to go quickly. Tebbit, her natural heir and the right's only credible candidate, loses out — he can only offer more of the same, and is the general who lost the campaign. Heseltine would not have an easy ride. Blame for 'rocking the boat' and the defeat are the other side of the same coin as distancing himself from Thatcher and having the courage to take her on. Some will never forgive him, in the same way that the refusal of Iain Macleod and Enoch Powell to serve Sir Alec Douglas-Home was always held against them.

Could Peter Walker carry the day? In Tory eyes, 'he had a good miners' strike', seizing the opportunity offered by Scargill. He kept backbenchers well-briefed. The electoral college was flattered. But many still see him as too much on one wing of the party to lead it. His coded attacks on Thatcher while staying in the Cabinet have stoked resentment on the right.

If neither Heseltine nor Walker could muster enough votes to win, would they do a deal in which one would withdraw? Their associates claim that it has not been discussed, but add that they remain friends and some such understanding could be reached. Certainly many on the centre-left of the party are adamant that the lesson of 1975 has been learned. 'We didn't sort ourselves out then, and look what we got — 15 years of Thatcher: we can't let it happen again'. But there must be doubts about the prospects of two such ambitious men being able to agree that one should step down.

If the succession came later — say two years or so into Thatcher's third Parliament — Heseltine's problems seem even greater. How did he contribute to the Tory victory? Others, including younger challengers like Environment Secretary Kenneth Baker, will have solid achievements to parade. As one former Minister commented, 'In the Tory Party it's practically impossible to achieve anything from the "outside", except possibly as a spoiler'. The pressure would be on Heseltine to step down and back Walker.

Tebbit's chances would be brighter, but the party is still likely to want a change from the Thatcher style. The territory he must cultivate in the party is already occupied. He has to convince the uncommitted that he would not frighten the horses. His answer is to smile a lot on *Question Time*, his version of the Thatcher voice-lowering trick. The more he smiles, the more his colleagues watch the spoons. More serious are the widespread doubts about his stamina.

Some smart money is already moving away from today's frontrunners. The few early holders of Douglas Hurd shares are bullish. He is highly regarded by kingmakers Whitelaw and Chief Whip John Wakeham. He appeals as a healer, with support across the centre, perhaps because of who he is *not* rather than because of who he *is*. 'He's the charismatic Geoffrey Howe vote'. One Minister reckoned 'it's about time we had a "gent" leading us again'. The left see him as a closet Wet: 'The tattoo on his buttock is "Wet"' was the comment from one, though it might have come from one of Hurd's own political novels.

But the Home Secretary's job is a minefield, not least because of the problems of the inner-cities. Heseltine will speak out on the inner-cities. With Walker no slouch on the issue, Tebbit berating Bernie Grant and Baker proclaiming the success of his urban programme, the inner-cities will form an unlikely part of the terrain in the Tory leadership battlefield. □

Rob Shepherd is a lobby correspondent with Channel 4's A Week in Politics.

This England

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□ There is a very successful restaurant in Baker Street called School Dinners where waitresses in black stockings and mini gymslips serve bangers and mash and bread pudding for £20 a head, and smack you if you don't eat up. — *The Observer Colour Magazine* (Daniel McQueen)

□ 'Much fear has been put into old age pensioners about the prospects for their bus passes. There have been slogans on all our buses. We even had the Prime Minister carried in effigy on a lorry. That misfired in Solihull High Street because people raised their hats as it went by.' — *Hansard* (D. Davies)

□ Kent Opera, invited to stage Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at this summer's Vienna Festival, applied to the British Council for a grant to help cover the £22,000 cost. It was refused — because Mozart wasn't British. — *The Times* (G. Heathcote)

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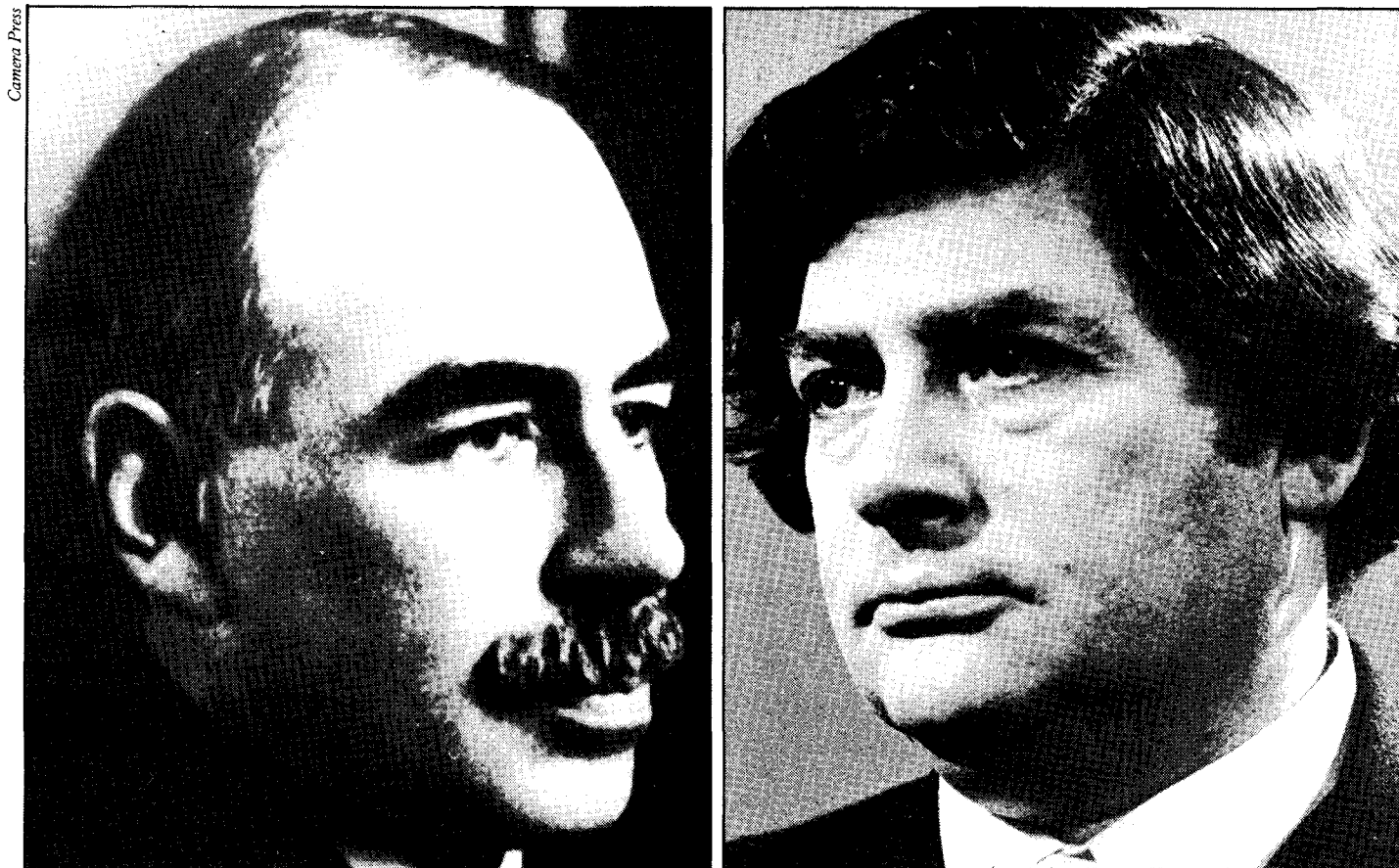
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ECONOMY BUMBLES INTO '86

**Interest rates up,
unemployment up,
monetarism in tatters —
Labour had better prepare for
an unholy economic mess,
argues professor MAURICE
PESTON**

THE NEWS this month that interest rates have risen and that so has unemployment is coincidental. But they are both indicative of what passes for economic policy under this government and its unwillingness, even inability, to pursue a serious and sustained programme of economic recovery.

Chancellor Lawson and the Employment Minister, Lord Young, stick to the view that employment and unemployment are a matter of *microeconomics*. They mean by this partly that they can be dealt with by cosmetic adjustments to the figures. This occurs on both sides of the balance sheet.

One objective is to take people out of benefit (and, therefore, out of the unemployment figures) and to put them on various schemes (not jobs) and continue to give them payments to live on but under another heading. I, for one, strongly favour a continuing training and retraining initiative, but one which leads to a net addition of employment for all the people

involved. The efforts of the Manpower Services Commission in this direction are bound to be frustrated by the inappropriate *macroeconomic* climate in which it operates.

As for employment, a large part of the alleged expansion is part time (and *faute de mieux* at that). On another part, the figures for the self-employed are literally invented. As a matter of direct observation we do not know what has happened to the numbers of people who work for themselves.

The consensus view of those forecasters who earn their living from this sort of thing has been that unemployment as officially measured will start to fall this year and start to rise again next. So they must all be a trifle surprised by this month's increase. In my view that is neither here nor there. What has really happened is that unemployment is out of control. This results from the government's basic 'anti-Keynesianism' — its belief that the economy can be safely left to itself to guarantee such real outcomes as full employment and optimum long run economic growth.

But the joke (if I may be frivolous about such a serious subject) is that so much *else* is out of control too. The government has had to recognise for some time that the money supply is out of control. Now the rise in base interest rates shows just as clearly that the interest rate

is out of control.

There is a standard examination question: 'The Chancellor can control the money supply or the interest rate, but not both. Discuss.' It is not *usual* to consider as an important part of the answer the Chancellor's inability to get to grips with either!

No better evidence of the sheer incompetence of successive Tory Chancellors since 1979 is required. How sad it is that they could not manage to control the one instrument that they said mattered most to them, while their predecessor had no such difficulty. (I know that some people say that was because Dennis Healey was a monetarist Chancellor himself. But that is to confuse the operation of a sensible monetary policy, which Keynesians have always proposed, with the dogma of monetarism.)

IN FACT, with his monetarist well-wishers squabbling among themselves, no one can blame the Chancellor for pursuing his own ends which now seem to be altogether different. His immediate policy target these days appears to be sterling's rate of exchange. To hit it, he now argues, in the short term interest rates must fluctuate to accommodate it. The previous analysis last year was that if you allow the exchange rate to float you do not have balance of payments crises, you have exchange rate crises instead. But, now, with an exchange rate targeted as official policy, this is

(Left) clarifier Keynes; (right) obfuscator Lawson

replaced by interest rate crises.

And if you ask, why do we now have a targeted exchange rate the answer is that if sterling collapsed again, it would intensify the inflation rate. But, you might then say, surely this government's great claimed achievement has been to solve the inflation problem? Precisely.

In short, on the economic front this government, despite the rhetoric, has solved nothing. The fear of inflation remains the main obstacle to rapid economic expansion and the restoration of anything like full employment. Ministers are always offended when it is said that large-scale unemployment is a necessary ingredient of their attempts to keep the inflation rate down. They prefer to call it an unwanted (and even an unexpected) by-product of otherwise sensible policies. (This is to confuse their psychological state with the actual condition of the economy.)

If inflationary potential remains so strong, but some tax cuts are a necessity, what else can the Chancellor do, but try to keep sterling as valuable as he can at least until after the general election? His problem, if course, is that, since he does not know what forces are going to hit sterling at any time, he cannot predict what will cause the next crisis or when.

If achieving lower inflation (even zero inflation) really is, as he says, his objective (and a rational incomes policy is rejected on ideological grounds), financial probity ought to require him to rein back public expenditure still more and to forego most if not all of his prospective tax cuts. But to do so would be to confirm the City's worst fears that he knows that the economic outlook for next year and

into the medium term is really dreadful. But to cut taxes on any significant scale will also, after the initial euphoria, give rise to concern.

All of this has great political significance. The Chancellor knows the risks he is running. His hope is to find a 'window' he can shoot through for just long enough to complete the third Conservative electoral confidence trick. There is always a chance that he can do so, aided and abetted by the latest news management techniques — and a press only too anxious to be manipulated.

But there is a bigger chance he will fail and we shall have a change of government. As before, that new government will be confronted with an immediate economic crisis, much worse than any we have had to cope with before. The Labour party is preparing for power, but curiously enough, not for the precise position it is likely to meet. The party has devised a sensible economic strategy to deal with relatively normal circumstances. It is also facing up to the need to reverse our long run decline in manufacturing. But it must be ready to take drastic measures to avoid a massive economic collapse on election day plus one. It simply must not underestimate the scale of the mess that the Conservatives have got us into.

Fifty years ago (5 February 1936) Keynes's *General Theory* was published. Not only was economics never to be the same again, but also, we hoped, the economy. The debate on what was Keynes's principal contribution started then and has continued up to the present day. I, for one, would not say that: 1) Keynes was the sole begetter of modern macroeconomics; 2) 'everything in

contemporary macroeconomics is to be found in or can trace its origins back to the *General Theory*; 3) nothing in the *General Theory* was mistaken; 4) Keynesianism is equivalent to being in favour of expanding public expenditure at all times and being against the taking of harsh decisions.

What I would argue is that the *General Theory* is the foundation of modern macroeconomics. In particular, it dealt the key theoretical blow to the proposition that the economy left to itself or in a fixed monetary environment operates at all satisfactorily.

Since Keynes's day we have also seen the emergence of something called 'monetarism'. This now takes two forms — that which is really Keynesian in a different language and that which is not. The former is rather a tortured way of being in favour of Keynesian policies without admitting it. (It is a favoured position of some City economists who wish to offend neither their bosses nor their clients.) The latter is rubbish and dangerous rubbish at that. Its motivation is ideological, and few people see it as serious economics any more.

I am not sure which of these groups the Chancellor is in. What is apparent is that he intervenes at least as much as any 'fine tuning' Keynesian would. What he does, however, is to demonstrate how stupid intervention can make things worse.

Keynes understood that, and Milton Friedman, the high priest of monetarism, paradoxically enough made the point in his best article some decades ago. But what the Thatcher monetarist experiment also does is to confirm the Keynesian hypothesis that *correct* intervention can make things better. □

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THE LAST ALL-WHITE PARLIAMENT

Neil Kinnock was buttonholed by TONY SEWELL for a car-ride interview about Labour and black representation in Parliament

HASN'T the Labour Party taken a faithful black vote for granted? I ask Neil Kinnock.

'That's partly true. Traditionally there has been an emotional appeal from Labour because it has stood for equality and the combating of racism . . . today the black community needs a particular gearing that delivers action.'

A journey seems an appropriate metaphor for Neil Kinnock, on the hopeful trail to government. We're sitting in a chauffeur-driven Rover on our way from Heathrow to the House of Commons and it's a sign of changing times that a Labour leader must take seriously the 'road signals' of the black community.

Under Wilson and Callaghan, didn't Labour drift away from black people? Kinnock acknowledges that previous Labour administrations were clouded by 'ignorance' and 'insensitivity'. Didn't such ignorance contribute seeds to the present inner-city deprivation, e.g. with the Wilson government showing great naivete in agreeing to the high-rise tower blocks which were to become a new totalitarian architecture? Kinnock qualifies that: 'It must be seen as a combination of Tory central government's desire to have cheap housing and Labour local government's desire to clear the slums. That's what resulted in the bloody monstrosities we now have'.

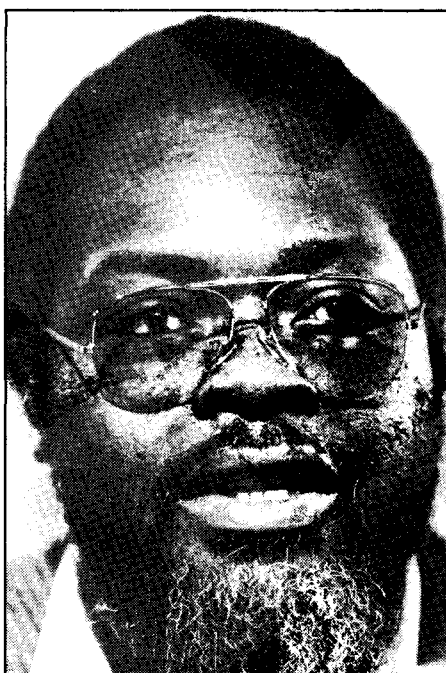
And past Labour administration ignorance didn't just apply to architecture, but contained an inability to *really* confront the deep realities of racism, particularly in education? 'There were acts of omission rather than commission'.

As the car hits the rush-hour traffic jam, Kinnock goes on to contemplate rioting: 'I had a discussion with a group of people in Liverpool deeply frustrated with injustice. They wanted to use violence as tactics. I said to them, who are you going to help? How are you going to advance the community from behind a prison wall?'

Out of these disturbances has emerged the large discussion about black representation. Are there going to be black MPs in a new Labour government? If so, how many? (There is silence, even the indifferent driver becomes interested.) 'It would limit black people,' says Kinnock, 'to a very small number of parliamentary seats if MPs were just elected from areas with a high proportion of black people. Therefore we are going to have, and rightly so, a number of black MPs

disproportionate to the percentage of black people in society.' Although Kinnock has left specific numbers to speculation, on this basis we can suppose he is talking in the region of 10-13 black MPs, maybe even more.

Many have argued that even the emergence of a number of black MPs would do nothing to change the racial imbalance of representation because they would be ineffectual backbenchers. What about a Cabinet position for one of the new incumbents? 'Very, very unlikely — they'd all be newcomers'. Among potential black candidates are people 'of the highest merit.' Can he name any? He laughs and says 'You don't want me to ruin their chances!'



Not going to 'patronise' Bernie Grant

As people stare in the car, contemplating the person who looks like Neil Kinnock, a historic statement: 'This current Parliament is the last without a black member. There will never be a House of Commons again without black people in it.' By natural progression there will also in the future be black members of a Labour Cabinet.

THE PROSPECT of Bernie Grant, leader of Haringey Council, becoming one of the first of these MPs was given Kinnock's blessing before the former's outburst after the Tottenham riot. Despite press agitation, Kinnock refuses to disown Grant. However, there is a warning for him: 'What Bernie did, and he knows it better than anyone else; was to provide a collapsing Tory Party Conference with something to focus around. I feel that he must bitterly regret what he said.' In his refusal to act towards Grant as he did over the Militant 'naughty boys', perhaps Neil Kinnock cannot afford to alienate a black leader? 'Grant's in a responsible position. That's got to be understood. I wrote to him and did condemn it, but we must go beyond this.'

Bernie Grant has been described as a leader walking the tightrope between street heroism and government office. Will Kinnock learn from American experience, where political parties involved themselves in the black community by forming allegiances with

certain leaders, e.g. Kennedy's relationship with Martin Luther King and Jimmy Carter's with Andrew Young? Can this happen in England? Kinnock is adamant: 'I've got black mates that go back 20 years. It was only five years ago that I realised there needs to be specific action to involve black people in the Labour Party. I have no intention of attempting to resolve any leadership crisis in the black community.' He describes the American system as 'patronage'.

This is all good moral stuff, but some would argue that because of the nature of racism, if black leaders, like Trade Union leaders, had some sort of access to Labour leadership then things would happen more effectively, as well as offering a lifeline to both groups. Kinnock dismisses this notion: 'In terms of positive action that we are taking in the Labour Party, in terms of the frequency of contact, I don't think there is an inhibition on access.'

His analysis attempts to resolve the difficulties that face black leaders by advocating that they lead from the front. The temptation to be a street hero must be resisted: 'The best leadership isn't always going to be the most popular. Those who are leaders must be responsible — if they seek popularity or immortality then there is big trouble because that isn't honest leadership.'

Though black sections have some fundamental weaknesses, namely their real level of support from the black community they purport to represent, I'm still waiting for a Labour politician to justify why Labour has five special sections on its National Executive yet no black section, and worse still no black member of the NEC. A fiery Kinnock responds: 'I'm not going to have divisions of race which are so prevalent in our society underscored and turned into constitutional effect. We have to find ways of reaching out to the black community and making them involved in the party. Black sections is a cul-de-sac taking us nowhere fast.'

But there is surely precedent in the Labour Party's women's sections? 'No one could sustain the argument that history's precedent for a provision for women is a parallel with racism. Black people suffer from different forms of discrimination which requires a different response.' Is Kinnock saying that women suffer greater discrimination? This he denies: it is the kind of experience, which in turn needs a different response. But what is the difference? 'It is the discrimination that is felt by individuals, not by mass groupings.' I wasn't sure at this stage who were the individuals, black people or women.

He goes on to define racism as coming from 'deep roots of superstition about the nature of black skins.' But one may have a deep rooted superstition that women should do the housework. To this Neil replies: 'You've just made clear the difference. Women's discrimination is based on history, property values and a notion of women's work. However, this does not relate to ridiculous superstitions about the nature of black skin.'

Kinnock fails to see that racism is as much an historical and economic oppression as sexism. The history of colonialism and slavery does have a direct bearing on how black people perceive themselves and how white people perceive them. In other words my question

isn't answered at all. I'm told that there is a difference between women's oppression and that faced by black people. But why should one group have special provision? Kinnock admits: 'It's an impossible question to answer.' Then he talks passionately: 'I refuse as a white socialist to create another gap, another separation in our movement. If we've got one, why do we make it better if we have two?'

The journey ends in the opposition car park outside the House of Commons. Neil Kinnock as Labour leader has certain advantages over his predecessors: he doesn't have to make the same mistakes, his honesty and passion might make him popular in the black community. But the black vote will have to be paid for in the currency of real political power as faithful voters now seek real demands. □

Tony Sewell is Features Editor of The Voice

FIGHT FOR LIFE

ASBESTOS A LIVE ISSUE

Working-class council tenants' fears about asbestos are being shrugged off with misleading appeals to expert evidence, reports JOLYON JENKINS

LATE LAST year tenants on the Ferrier council estate in Greenwich, London, staged a sit-in at the council site-office demanding attention to their fears about asbestos fibre used in the construction of their homes. Three years ago, at the time of the explosive Yorkshire TV asbestos documentary *Alice — A Fight for Life* (September 1982), they could have been sure of fast and concerned reaction, such was the publicity about asbestos as a health-risk.

Now the 'Doll-Peto Report' is being used as if it proved that residential risks from asbestos are statistically negligible. Published in 1985 by the Health & Safety Commission (HSC) as *The Effects on Health of Exposure to Asbestos*, but generally known for its authors, professors Richard Doll and Julian Peto, the report was a response to public shock. It concentrated on the hazards likely to be met at work, rather than in the home, as 'the evidence relating to non-occupational exposure is either too insubstantial ... or, if it is clear, is unquantifiable.'

However, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) passed on to the authors some findings of work carried out for the Department of the Environment on asbestos levels in homes, and Doll and Peto were persuaded to 'comment briefly' on the effects of non-occupational exposure as well.

Those brief comments — one page out of 58 — tentatively concluded that perhaps one person out of 100,000 exposed to asbestos (or one extra person in the entire population) dies each year from asbestos in the home. The

figure was seized on by the media as a recognisable landmark in an otherwise densely scientific document. 'Asbestos: panic can stop, says top cancer expert,' was a *Sunday Times* sub-editor's gloss. 'Asbestos risk "negligible",' said *The Times*.

Less excusable was the reaction of John Rimington, director general of the HSE, the body that commissioned the study: 'The report ... endorses [our] attempts to emphasise the difference between occupational and environmental exposure. It will help people get the risks from asbestos in perspective, for after all we have lived, we do live, and for some purposes must continue to live with asbestos.'

Doll and Peto, who weren't really concerned with environmental exposure at all, found that their tentative speculations had been elevated into gospel truth. But how had Doll and Peto arrived at the figure of one death in 100,000? They took the figure that the HSE had given them, which was that in asbestos-containing buildings the level was rarely above 0.0005 fibres per millilitre (f/ml) and compared it with known industrial levels, which were several hundreds or thousands of times greater. By extrapolating from the known industrial mortality rates, they were able to estimate domestic mortality rates. They were aware that this was a highly risky procedure, full of unknown quantities.

They made a number of extraordinary class-based assumptions:

- They took an average exposure time of 40 hours a week, which is clearly a gross underestimate for women at home, pre-school children, the unemployed and pensioners.
- They assumed that exposure would be for 20 years, although people live in asbestos-containing houses for much longer.
- They relied on data obtained for adult males — though the effects on children are known to be much greater.
- They assumed that the asbestos would be the white variety, whereas many council properties contain the more dangerous blue and brown asbestos.
- They ignored the effect of smoking in an asbestos-containing environment. Asbestos has a multiplying effect on the propensity of smoking to cause lung cancer. And smoking is a predominantly working-class habit.

Some of these factors are actually acknowledged in the main part of the report on occupational hazards, yet are unaccountably ignored in the brief page of speculation.

ALTHOUGH Doll and Peto were unwise to ignore so many important factors, the way their report has been interpreted seems to have disturbed them. When David Gee, the Health and Safety Officer for the General and Municipal Workers Union, wrote to Richard Doll suggesting that misuse of the report might lead to complacency about the dangers of asbestos, Doll replied that this was a 'very important comment'.

Because no proper source is given for the figure of 0.0005 f/ml, it's difficult to say whether it's a fair average or not. But recent evidence suggests that certain homes have far higher levels of asbestos. And again, it is working-class council tenants who are at the greatest risk.

The Ferrier estate in Greenwich is a grey, ugly, graffiti-ridden construction that looks older than its 15 years. It was a prototype for many similar developments around the country and was referred to in an LCC brochure as 'one of the final examples of the classical concrete form.'

The method of construction is known as 'system-built deck access': 'deck-access' means that each flat is entered from a walkway that runs around the outside of the building. 'System-built' means that it was literally slotted together: cranes were then tied together. It was cheap, 'modern', quick, and could be assembled by unskilled labour. It was instant housing.

It also contains large amounts of asbestos fibres. This became apparent during 1985 when the council started to make the estate more 'crime-proof' by fitting stronger doors onto the flats and splitting up the walkways. Tests were carried out and it was found that in some cases, the readings were as high as 0.16 f/ml — 300 times the Doll/Peto assumptions. And a high proportion of the fibres were brown and blue, which are far more dangerous than white. The main problem was that fibres were released whenever doors were slammed: the cheap, shoddy construction had made the entire building unstable. Anybody putting up a shelf or drilling a wall would be putting themselves at even greater risk.

The residents of the Ferrier estate are classic examples of the people Doll and Peto ignored. 40 per cent are unemployed; 25 per cent are under five. No one bothered to tell them properly about the hazards they were living with, and even if they had known, there was little they could do about it. In terms of the Doll-Peto report they are statistically abnormal, but all around the country there are people like them, living with levels of asbestos hundreds or thousands of times higher than what is considered 'safe'. □



14 February

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WITH WOMEN IN senior management and commissioning editor posts, Channel 4 has acquired an unusually pro-woman reputation in broadcasting. And well it should, since it is legally required to transmit a 'suitable proportion of matter calculated to tastes and interests' not catered for by ITV. Thus, in 1983, after negotiations which took over a year to complete, the Channel, representatives of independent programme producers and the tele-film union ACTT issued this statement of intent:

Channel 4 is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to avoiding discrimination in all aspects of employment on grounds of sex, marital status, race or religious belief. Channel 4 expects its programme suppliers to adopt positive employment policies on these important matters.

More than two years later, a survey conducted by the Women's Film, Television and Video Network suggests that this undertaking has hardly begun to be implemented, not least because many of the Channel's key personnel seem wholly unaware of it.

WFTVN was founded in 1981 to support and facilitate women's work for the Channel. Since then it has expanded into an invaluable advisory and monitoring service — compiling directories of women media workers, conducting familiarisation courses for would-be entrants into the industry, and lobbying relevant bodies for increased training and employment opportunities.

This autumn the Network's researchers surveyed both the Channel's internal employment practices and those required of its programme suppliers. The investigation itself was a difficult enterprise: the Channel's small and busy staff includes no one with specific responsibilities for this area, and the records necessary for any positive action programme are not kept. In common with the BBC — who have recently been criticised for ignoring the Commission for Racial Equality's recommendation to maintain



Women out of fashion in Channel 4

MANDY MERCK

ethnic records — the Channel has deemed such a mechanism discriminatory. The consequences of such a policy, as BBC Radio Community Affairs Correspondent John Clare argued in *The Listener*, is that the employer 'simply has no way of telling whether any of those responsible for recruitment and promotion are in fact discriminating directly or indirectly, intentionally or otherwise.'

Although Channel 4 can supply figures on the gender composition of its own workforce, most of its Commissioning Editors make no attempt to monitor the gender and racial composition of companies contracted to supply programmes or of unsuccessful applicants. When questioned by WFTVN, one member of the Drama department maintained that it wasn't her job 'to tell an independent producer whom she should or should not employ', while the Commissioning Editor for Series and Serials confessed himself unsure as to whether the Channel pursued an equal opportunities policy at all.

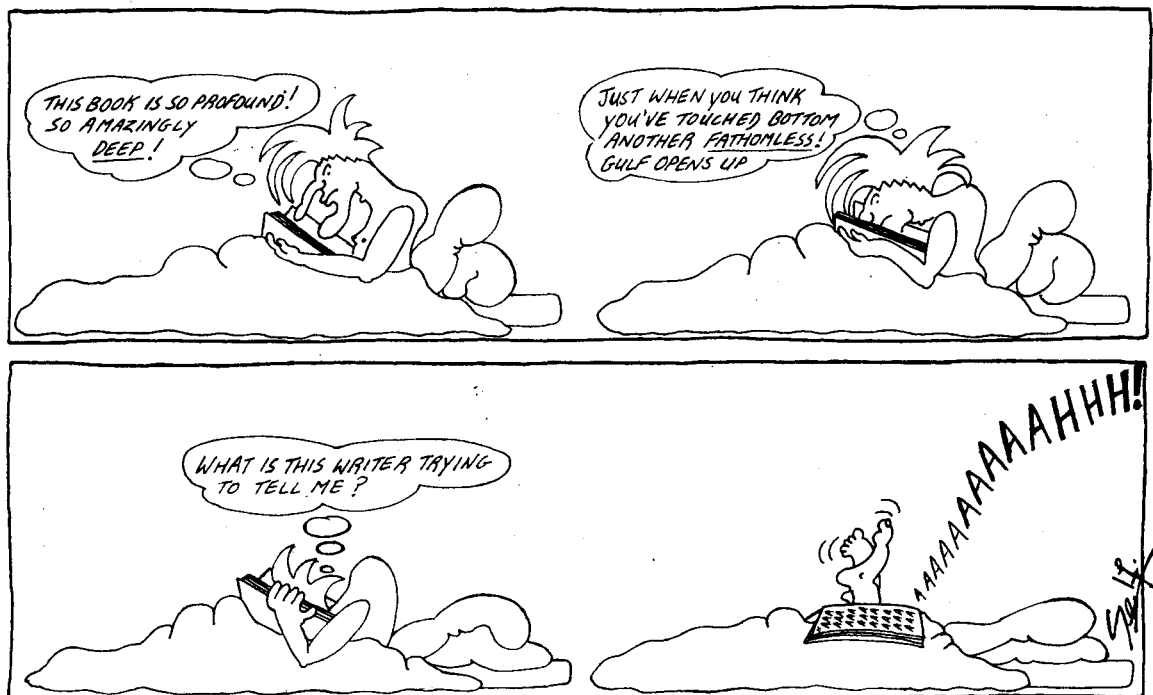
To its credit, the Current Affairs Department does record the number of proposals received from women and the

composition of crew lists on 'women oriented' productions. And four Departments — Current Affairs, Documentary, Education and Independents — have recommended greater female involvement to particular programme suppliers. Such positive encouragement is, of course, very different from merely 'not discriminating against' whatever applicants for jobs or commissions present themselves.

Meanwhile, WFTVN's survey demonstrates that independently-produced programmes with an identifiable female 'involvement' (a deliberately generous category) represent a declining proportion of the Channel's output — with even the well-intentioned Current Affairs, Education and Independents Departments showing steep reductions over the past two years. Women whose programme proposals were refused after the Channel's first few months on the grounds that 'we've done women now' may not find this news surprising. Ironically, the Broadcasting Act's stipulations on 'innovation' have often been used *against* women's work — perceived in some sections of the Channel as an exhaustible genre.

WFTVN suggests that Channel 4 get serious about these failings, start recording race and gender in crew lists, training, programme orientation, and review their commissioning ethos. (While they're at it, they might examine the GLC's experiment in US-style contract compliance, whereby the Council vetted 159 of its larger suppliers to ensure a fair proportion of ethnic hiring.) They could also employ an Equality officer of their own, if only to prevent the buck-passing which greeted this investigation. And finally — given the DOE's recent snatch of GLC-earmarked funds from WFTVN — it would be good to see Channel 4 campaigning for a secure future for this women's network; a vital broadcasting pressure group.

The Women's Film, Television and Video Network is at 79 Wardour Street, London W1, 01-434 2076.



DIARY

David Edgar

Try as they might, it is hard for diligent diarists to avoid structuring their lives, even in part, around the prospect of having to reveal their doings to the nation. This time, things looked dandy. A trip to Manchester (about which I had planned to reminisce), a key union negotiation (from which I had thought judiciously to leak) . . . Hardly a day, I note, did not include some prospectively amusing or dramatic incident, all of them but bristling with anecdotal potential. As things fell out, however, the most interesting thing that's happened to me since 9.35 am on 4 January was when the dog fell asleep on my foot, for it was only just after Saturday breakfast, as I was engaged in no more harmful activity than pouring a cup of coffee, that I experienced the sensation of being jabbed in the small of the back by a cattleprod, slumped on to the kitchen table, and did not stand up straight for 72 hours. Now — as I write — I am managing to hobble about a bit and am seriously thinking about having a go at taking my own socks off. By the time you read this, I confidently expect to be taking baths and walking out. But there is, I can assure you, little prospect of me being back in the curling team ere Candlemas.

Fellow sufferers won't need telling that I've put my back out. This is a chronic condition, to which tall men are peculiarly prone (all that polite stooping, playing hell with the posture). It is matched by the equally chronic condition of the various professionals devoted (I use the word loosely) to its alleviation. Is there another disorder, which can lay the sufferer out on the floor, in excruciating pain, for indeterminate periods of time, for which neither the public nor the private ends of the market can provide on the spot treatment on Saturday, or indeed (in the latter case), any day of the week? The fact that osteopathy is not available on the NHS (and indeed is still viewed by some GPs — though not mine — as a branch of voodoo) leads many back victims, their tails both politically and literally between their legs, to choose temporary relief over the permanence of principle. The fact that the free marketeers of the lumbar spine provide such an inadequate service, apparently making no housecalls and pissing off at weekends, adds irony to injury.

None of this should imply that things have been all black down here. First of all, I would like to thank my immediate family (not to mention the lodgers), whose continuing solicitations have sustained me throughout this distressing (and potentially humiliating) episode. I must also make mention of certain elements of medium-level technology, without which I would have been in exactly the same position, but I suspect literally

delirious with boredom. Hardly had I hit the deck but I was demanding that my trusty walkperson be brought soonest to my side and, as soon as I could raise my head at the slightest of angles (and long before I could do anything as advanced as reading), I was underseeing the repositioning of the television set and the video recorder and, armed with the fastest remote controls in the west, I set off boldly into a kind of third generation OK Corral, flashing from channel to channel, from teletext to video, as happy as the days were long. Tape after tape — many of them dusty with age — have given up their long-forgotten treasures — the best bits, of course, being the unintended recordings of long-since-shelved advertisements, and indeed personalities too, as the fragmented closing headlines of ancient newscasts tickle hindsight with reports of recently triumphant Secretaries of State, their otherwise glittering prospects suddenly threatened by the spiteful machinations of women they have slighted. But, what is this? Have I pressed the wrong button, and am I watching off air? Yes, indeed, Prime Minister.

In making the above cheap and gratuitous conflation, I am rejecting my own advice, given here last autumn, that this way danger lies. On that occasion, I was predicting that, as specific memories faded, the events at Bradford's football stadium and those at Heysel in Brussels would merge, and the scandal of the former would be submerged by the continuing outrage at the enormities of the latter. In fact, this has occurred — not just in the year-end round-ups, but in the coverage of subsequent matters like the withdrawal of Cannon's sponsorship from the football league. To give but one example, the six o'clock BBC news on 7 January referred, in unabashed fashion, to 'the tragedies of Brussels and Bradford'. Such sloppiness is an

ROGER WODDIS Warnography

Washington has condemned the ABC television network for postponing 'Amerika', a drama series about a Russian takeover. The BBC this week launched 'Comrade Dad', a comedy series about a future Britain under Soviet rule.

The loonies are at large again:
The lickers of the ruling bum
Smell horror in a world grown sane,
Which adds to their delirium.

The millions clapping the release
Of Rambo and of Rocky IV
Must learn the awful threat of peace,
The large and lovely loot of war.

What keeps the howling wolves at bay
And breaks the hug of hungry bears
Delineates the decent way
To amplify the price of shares.

However sick the song that's sung,
Expressing tragedy or farce,
Pay heed to the creative tongue
Inserted in the moneyed arse.



insult to the victims of both.

The tendency for like to be compared all too readily with unlike is colouring the question of expulsions from the Labour Party. One of the arguments of those who loathe and detest Militant but oppose purges is, of course, that it won't stop there, particularly at a time in which the Labour leadership is apparently taking advice on its style of presentation from Sylvester Stallone. One example of the if-in-doubt-chuck-'em-out syndrome is the case of two loyal and hard-working Labour members (one of them a Councillor) recently expelled from the Birmingham Sparkbrook Party — one following a meeting of black members and the other after his appearance on the famous Bandung file programme, in which various allegations were made about malpractices in the recruitment of new members. Now there are rules against doing what Militant allegedly does, but there are none (as yet) against 'trying to organise a black section' nor 'bringing the Labour Party into disrepute', which are among the charges that have been levelled against these individuals. The West Midlands regional party — which will hear the appeals of Kevin Scally and Councillor Amir Khan soon — has the opportunity to stop this madness in its tracks.

I had thought to end with a broadside. The most convenient way to buy theatre tickets, if you have a credit card, is to reserve them by telephone, giving your card number, and then you pick them up on the night. The catch is that once they've got your number, the booking is not only irrevocable but *untransferable*. I had on this basis made a booking to see my good friend Tony Sher in Harvey Fierstein's *Torch Song Trilogy* at the Albery Theatre in St Martin's Lane (Monday to Friday 7.15, Saturday 2.00 and 7.30) and the reason for the puff is that, having prepared myself for a blazing row on the telephone (how could I have predicted that I would be horizontalised?), I was completely disarmed by the Albery box office, which — after a quick word with the credit card people — promptly, cheerfully and charmingly agreed that under these special circumstances equity demanded that I be fully refunded.

ABORIGINES CALL FOR JOINT UK-AUSTRALIAN REPARATIONS

A £100m bill looms for cleaning tribal lands polluted in Britain's '50s A-bomb programme, writes ROBERT MILLIKEN

Sydney
ON 26 JANUARY, Aborigines from Wallatinna and Lake Dey Dey in South Australia will gather to plan a campaign following last month's report by the Australian Royal Commission on the British nuclear tests of the 1950s. The meeting, involving several hundred Aborigines, is due to be held near Maralinga, the main British atomic testing ground. 26 January is the day when Captain Arthur Phillip raised the Union Jack at Sydney Cove in 1788 and declared Australia British.

26 January has always been known officially as Australia Day, although it is not celebrated with the same gusto as, say, the French or American national days. This year, however, Australia Day takes on new significance.

In some respects, the British nuclear tests were the final episode in Australia's history of unswerving foreign policy identification with British interests. The Royal Commission spent almost 18 months inquiring into the conduct of the 12 nuclear weapons tests which Britain conducted in Australia between 1952 and 1957 — plus a series of so called minor trials, which went on up to 1963. At the time, up to 1,500 Aborigines lived in and around the vast Maralinga test zone, part of their traditional tribal lands which the British and Australian authorities simply took over without consultation. It was typical of the way Aborigines were treated in Australia in the '50s. They had no vote; their land rights were not recognised by any Australian government, State or Federal; they were not even counted in the national census before 1967.

In one sense, the Royal Commission's 700 page report can be seen as part of a process that has gone on for the past 15 years, of white Australia doing penance for past injustices to the Aborigines. Land rights are now recognised in all but the most reactionary state, Queensland, though there have been increasingly loud grumblings among Australian conservatives recently that the whole land rights business has 'gone too far'. At the end of 1984, the Pitjantjatjara Aborigines of central and south Australia were handed back the former Maralinga atomic testing grounds by a special Act passed by the South Australian parliament.

The most concrete of the Royal Commission's 201 conclusions and seven



Prof. Ernest Titterton spoke up for testing in Australia in the '50s . . .

recommendations focus on Aboriginal welfare. They include the controversial findings that Britain should pay for cleaning up the test sites, to make them safe for Aborigines to return there permanently, and that Australia should compensate the Aborigines for the loss of their lands and the social dislocations they have suffered over the past 35 years. The purpose of the Aborigines' conference on Australia Day is to bring political pressure to make sure something comes of all this.

The report has presented Bob Hawke's Labor government in Canberra, as well as the British government, with a dilemma. If Britain chose to ignore the report, there would be little chance of Australia 'doing a New Zealand' and joining the anti-nuclear camp: Hawke's government has already overturned many of Australian Labor's traditional anti-nuclear policies and has ensured Australia's

continuing involvement in the world nuclear scene by approving new uranium mining ventures.

But the Royal Commission and its report gathered enough political momentum to make the options on what to do about it very limited for both countries. For London and Canberra simply to ignore the report, as both would prefer to do, would mean that the Maralinga affair will continue to be a source of political, economic and legal tension between Britain and Australia for years.

BRITISH and Australian ministers are due to discuss its findings soon. Privately, the Australian government's reaction has been mixed. A diplomatic tightrope will have to be walked if, as the Royal Commission recommended, Australia is to persuade Britain to tear up two agreements, sealed in 1968 and 1979, by which Australia signed away any



The Photo Source

... and Premier Robert Menzies kept the details under his hat

further claims arising from British responsibilities for the Maralinga test site.

The Australian government is also conscious of Whitehall's view that the inquiry was biased against Britain from the start. Indeed, the British government's final submission to the Royal Commission in Sydney last September referred particularly to the head of the Royal Commission, James McClelland, an abrasive judge, a former Labor minister and an uncompromising Australian nationalist. McClelland let his feelings show, without seeming to bother about the consequences. His public rebuke to the Thatcher government over Whitehall's excessive secrecy, at the opening of the 10 weeks of hearings in London a year ago, was certainly a brilliant tactical move which unleashed thousands of secret documents containing the real story of the '50s nuclear tests.

But the judge's more gratuitous comments in newspaper and television interviews, including petty attacks on Thatcher in a context that had nothing to do with his brief, lost him points. McClelland appeared obsessed with the anglophile policies of Robert (later Sir Robert) Menzies, prime minister in the '50s, who willingly — indeed eagerly — allowed the British nuclear tests to take place; and also with the role of Ernest (later Sir Ernest) Titterton, the most important Australian scientist at the tests.

Titterton was a British physicist, who had been a key member of the British team on the Manhattan Project in the United States, which built the first atomic bomb. Shortly before the first British atomic test in Australia, in October 1952, Titterton went to work in Australia at the invitation of Mark (later Sir Mark) Oliphant, another veteran of the Manhattan Project. Oliphant, Australian by

birth, differed from Titterton in that he had turned against nuclear weapons after Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Although he was eminently qualified to join the Australian Safety Committee of Scientists, appointed by Menzies to monitor the British tests, Oliphant was never invited to do so. Documents released to the Royal Commission disclosed the reason for this. Britain was afraid of upsetting the Americans, who regarded Oliphant as a security risk.

Titterton became Australia's most staunch advocate of nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. Lord Penney, the 'father' of the British bomb, invited him to attend the British tests and the British government secretly asked Menzies to release him from his new university post in Canberra so that he could do so. There is little doubt that Titterton's scientific services were valued; but the British also saw him as a good buffer if the Australians became too difficult with demands for information as the tests proceeded.

McClelland in his report spoke scathingly of a British plot to 'plant' Titterton on Menzies: 'he was from first to last "their man".' But this thesis ignores the fact that the British were welcomed to the Australian nuclear test sites in the 1950s as a demonstration of Australia's contribution to the Cold War and as symbol of a desire to keep Britain involved militarily in Australia's part of the world. It was only in the later years of the British nuclear tests, when public opinion in Australia turned against them, that the Menzies government and its advisers began to panic because their earlier open-door policy had left them with little or no knowledge about what the British were doing. But by then, it was too late.

The Australian press has reacted with scepticism to these aspects of the Royal Commission's report. The *Australian*

Financial Review commented:

It is all very well in 1985 to dismiss Prime Minister Menzies as 'anglophile', but in the 1950s a majority of Australians would have answered to that description . . . It may also be remembered that at that time Sir Ernest Titterton was regarded as something of a hero in Australia, one of those men who would be able to lead us into the new age of nuclear technology. Most of these attitudes turned out to be illusions, but it didn't make them any less valid at the time.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* went further:

Superficially attractive as its main recommendations may appear, the report of the Royal Commission into British nuclear tests in Australia is hardly a satisfactory document. It is certainly a powerful revelation of past Australian errors and incompetence. But its attempt to make a case for reparations by the UK government is poorly grounded and its failure to define appropriate compensatory measures by our government disappointing . . . The report invites Britain to accept its 'overwhelming moral obligation'. But the success of such an appeal depends to no little extent on the standing of the Commission. Even before it reported, the Commission had been diminished by some of the pom bashing antics of its chair. The looseness of its final report hardly rescues it.

THE FULL EXTENT of the plutonium contamination at Maralinga was only revealed in May 1985, when the Melbourne-based Australian Radiation Laboratory issued a report of a survey in which, using more sophisticated detection equipment than any available before, its scientists discovered up to 100,000 tiny metal fragments contaminated with plutonium and scattered around a site called Taranaki.

These were the result not of the seven bomb trials held at Maralinga in 1956 and 1957, but of a separate and secret series of experiments known as the 'minor trials'. Up to 700 minor trials were conducted in Australia in experiments designed to test the behaviour of different segments of atomic weapons.

Because low-yield fission explosions were involved, the Vixen trials were flouting the spirit, if not the letter, of the nuclear test moratorium from 1958 to 1961. Paradoxically, they were called 'safety trials', but the plutonium they left behind has made the place too dangerous for the Aboriginal owners of the Maralinga lands to inhabit. Plutonium has a half life — the time taken for half its radioactivity to decay — of more than 24,000 years.

The Australian Safety Committee of Scientists, which Titterton chaired after 1957, was frozen out of the minor trials. Britain allowed no Australian representatives to attend them, although documents have revealed how Titterton knew at least part of what was going on and, in one case, had been prepared to give the British the green light. A secret British cable reported: 'Fortunately Titterton took it upon himself to agree in principle even though he had no details'.

The Aborigines and their advisers believe that the Royal Commission may have made a tactical miscalculation in trying to force the entire clean up cost on to Britain. In their outstanding final submission to the Royal Commission last September, drafted by their two Adelaide barristers, Geoff Eames and

Andrew Collett, the Aborigines argued that since the British and Australian governments were equally responsible for holding the nuclear tests, both should share the cost of cleaning up the range. The Royal Commission report adopted all the Aborigines' arguments except this one.

The cost of removing the contamination in a way that would allow Aborigines unrestricted access to the test sites will be enormous. The Royal Commission pointed to some rough options and costs, which were assembled hastily last year by the Australian Atomic Energy Commission. If all the options were undertaken, involving the treatment and burial of 480,000 tonnes of contaminated soil and the removal of existing concrete burial pits containing radioactive debris, the cost could be as high as £98 million. Clearly, neither Britain nor Australia would be prepared to take on something of this financial magnitude by itself.

Perhaps the biggest winner from the whole affair has been 'freedom of information'. Although many of the more lurid allegations about the tests were not stood up in the evidence — such as the bodies of dead Aborigines being found in a bomb crater and mentally retarded patients being secretly placed in a bunker next to a bomb explosion — there were alarming revelations enough.

The fact that the two main Australian test sites, Maralinga and the Monte Bello Islands, were shown to be unsuitable for firing nuclear bombs, because of unfavourable weather conditions, demonstrates the futility of scientific claims at the time that nuclear tests were safe. □

AFRICA DEBT

BABANGIDA PLAYS ANTI- IMF CARD

**SUZANNE CRONJE on
Nigeria's struggles to retain
economic autonomy in the face
of its creditors**

WHEN SIR GEOFFREY HOWE visited Lagos last September, he was adamant that Britain would not agree to the rescheduling of Nigeria's debts until the new government in Lagos had reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund. Such an agreement, he said, would 'open the way to new credit'.

But, when Nigerian Foreign Minister Akinyemi arrived in London last week, the position had changed. Britain, he was told, was prepared to open a new line of export credits once existing debts had been rescheduled — and there was no mention of the IMF.

In the intervening four months, Nigeria's President Babangida made two unilateral

decisions: he announced that his government had broken off negotiations with the IMF and his 1986 budget limited foreign debt and interest repayments to 30 per cent of export earnings. Confronted with this new determination, Britain had to decide whether it wanted to remain Nigeria's largest trading partner. Before coming to Britain, Akinyemi had already spelled out his country's position: 'We are the largest black population in the world ... a vibrant economy, where contractors are falling over themselves to bid'.

Western bankers are still trying to assess the potential domino effect of Nigeria's decision to throw its considerable weight behind the growing Third World revolt against IMF diktats on how debtor nations must behave if they want to borrow more money. This money is required to pay interest on what is already owed to countries whose interests the IMF really represents — the industrialised West.

In Nigeria's case, as in most others, the IMF prescription for returning to a state of creditworthy grace included a package of painful economic measures. The main ingredients were the withdrawal of government subsidies on petrol, privatisation of the state sector and the adoption of a liberal trade policy — ie the removal of import barriers inhibiting the free inflow of Western goods.

Countries which implement the IMF measures often experience food riots and other expressions of political instability. This fact was brought to Babangida's mind by the widespread adverse reactions to Sir Geoffrey's comments in Lagos. Within days, Babangida launched a public debate on the merits of accepting a \$2.5 billion loan on IMF conditions. A presidential commission was appointed to gather opinion in all of Nigeria's 19 states and from all sections of the population.

This nationwide consultation was unprecedented. Even elected civilian governments in Nigeria have never initiated such an operation. The result was an overwhelming verdict against the IMF option, despite clear official warnings that, regardless of IMF conditions, there would have to be a lengthy period of stringent austerity.

The dismay in London when Babangida announced the outcome verged in some cases on disbelief. The 'defiance' by Lagos of the IMF (and, indirectly, Britain) heralds similar moves from other African countries, like Tanzania. By themselves they carried little weight, since their purchasing power is small compared to Nigeria's. In Latin America, of course, such threats of defiance have been expressed for some years and, in the case of Peru, carried out, without any collapse of the world economic system.

But Africa was regarded as more compliant. The fact that the Nigerian budget includes many of the stringencies recommended by the IMF cut little ice in some City quarters. What really worries them is the fact that this restructuring is being undertaken without an IMF loan and excludes the IMF and its backers from determining the nature of the economic hardships Nigeria chooses to undergo.

Babangida introduced his budget by saying that he wanted to reduce the 'excessive link of

our society to external impulses' and to inaugurate an era of economic reconstruction, social justice and self-reliance. This will mean independence at a tremendous cost to ordinary Nigerians: petrol prices have doubled and new levies on companies are bound to increase unemployment.

The government has ordered a drastic cut in all wages (the defence budget is down by 20 per cent). Employers who do not adhere to this directive stand to forfeit scarce import licences. The trade unions have already complained about the effects of the budget on their members and one student union has linked the Babangida administration with 'capitalist lackeys'. The rejection of the IMF has its own inherent dangers.

WITHIN A WEEK of the IMF decision the government announced that it had uncovered a plot to assassinate Babangida and some of his senior colleagues. A general and several other leading military figures were arrested. The reasons for the conspiracy, as given by the military leadership, were connected with the IMF controversy: officers opposed to Babangida argued that the big army pay cuts might have been avoided if the IMF loan had been agreed and that many of the other sacrifices now demanded would have been unnecessary. There were other important motives: the resentment of the conservative North which lost power in Babangida's August coup, fears that the new government's relaxed policies on press freedom will undermine traditional values, and personal ambition all played a part. But since the excitement of the plot, which helped to disguise the full impact of the budget, the government has come up with what cynics call 'further diversions'. A major foreign policy debate has been called for April, with preliminary arguments on possible measures to implement South African boycott decisions. This national forum will be on the pattern of the IMF debate.

Babangida has now announced the most important part of his consult-the-people strategy. This is a debate on the country's future political system which will aim at 'a new social and economic order based on peace, stability, harmony and an equitable distribution of national resources'. The committee which is to conduct this wide-ranging discussion is headed by the Vice-Chancellor of Port Harcourt University, Dr Sylvanus Cookey, who was a leading figure on the Biafran side of the Nigerian civil war of 1967-70, in which Babangida was with the federal forces.

The political arguments are to be concluded by the end of this year, but the target date for an eventual return of civilian rule is October 1990. By then, Babangida will either have succeeded in rehabilitating Nigeria's economy — in which case he is likely to become an elected political saviour — or he will have been overthrown by more efficient plotters.

Narrow British interests would best be served by his continuation in power. The 30 per cent ceiling he imposed on debt repayment is considered generous by most Nigerians. In practice, it is probably only marginally below what an agreement with IMF blessing would have secured. □

LETTERS

The mentally ill — who cares?

Simon Wessely, Registrar in Psychiatry, Royal Bethlem & Maudsley Hospital

A major article highlighting the plight of the mentally ill is to be welcomed, especially when it appears in the pages of the *New Statesman* (10 January). However, Mr Berry's account of the difficulties encountered in effecting the change from hospital-based to community-based care, far from highlighting the real problems of this change, instead perpetuated outdated stereotypes, ignored recent advances and grossly distorted and misrepresented the efforts of the many people currently involved in the care of the mentally ill.

The truth is somewhat different. Mr Berry is apparently unaware of how community care ever evolved. He ignores the pioneering role of doctors and nurses in developing alternatives to hospital care, such as a therapeutic community, day hospitals and centres, sheltered workshops, community nursing, hostels, occupational and social rehabilitation. Indeed, far from opposing such developments, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the apparent villain of the piece as the embodiment of the 'psychiatric establishment', espouses them wholeheartedly. Perhaps the clearest exposition of community care comes in the report of the College Working Party on Rehabilitation, which unequivocally views mental illness in its social context.

The problem instead lies in any attempt to view mental illness as a product of any 'model', be it medical, psychoanalytic or social, for this is the surest way to ignore the real needs of the individual. The Royal College report states that 'exclusively medical or social "models" are inadequate to describe, explain or help psychiatric disabilities'.

What Michael Meacher and the psychiatric establishment are in fact guilty of, is concern for the real needs of those people who will no longer find shelter in hospital. It is true that there is appallingly inadequate provision for the realities of community care, but to express doubts about the wisdom of immediate closure of mental hospitals is not the same as opposing the community movement.

Furthermore, it is adding insult to injury to state that the community centres that all mental health workers would like to see must contain 'staff trained in caring and listening skills — not psychiatric experts'. Mr Berry may justify the inclusion of such views by ascribing them to the

'anti-psychiatry' movement but why could he not find space for the views of those people who actually work in mental health, many of whom are also Labour Party members and may take exception to his apparent contrast between socialist policy and psychiatry? I am disturbed by Mr Berry's implications that both psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses are not only incapable, but also unwilling to care for the mentally ill.

No debacle

Margaret Hodge, Leader, Islington Council, London

Let there be no doubt that Islington Council treats complaints of both sexual and racial harassment very seriously indeed (NS 10 January).

The black worker who was sacked for sexual harassment (and whose appeal was turned down this week) was advised of the council's grievance procedure, but chose not to follow it.

The incidents which gave rise to the two disciplinary actions arose the same week and, substantively, the same day.

His complaint about racial harassment was received by his department the day after a typist had filed a grievance against him for sexual harassment, not vice versa. The hearings were set for the same day.

The black worker had worked for the council less than a month before a complaint was filed against him. He was taken on on a temporary contract of up to six months, during the strike over Vi Howell, and had worked three months before he was sacked. The relief estate manager, a long serving permanent member of staff, was suspended for a week without pay, severely reprimanded, and warned that he'd be dismissed if he was found guilty of racial harassment again.

I am satisfied that the council acted justly in both situations, and reject allegations of any debacle or that our equal opportunities policy needs to be more consistently implemented.

The Anti-Larkin Left Menace

Dr Maggie Gee, London NW1

Francis Wheen, in his tribute to Philip Larkin (NS 20-27 December) claimed to challenge a threatening left anti-Larkin orthodoxy. I assume Mr Wheen was driven to this silly posture by his reluctance to appear in the less glamorous role of an ordinary mourner. Since I am among those,

and have all Larkin's books on my shelves, I deeply object to the association of my name with Wheen's anti-Larkin Left Menace.

Just because I dared to call Doris Lessing's *The Good Terrorist* 'over-rated' (in a *Literary Review* compendium of Under-rated and Over-rated Books of 1985) he is not entitled to assume that I think Ms Lessing 'beyond the pale' or want to put her 'on the banned list'. There is a further intellectual dishonesty in the logical leap he then makes from Lessing to Larkin.

'Maggie Gee has the honesty to admit that her objections to *The Good Terrorist* are purely ideological,' says Wheen. On the contrary, I objected to *The Good Terrorist* as a 'competently packaged ideological tract'. If Wheen thinks for a moment he will see that this is a *literary* objection; I was saying that there is *too much* ideology in the book (rather than the *wrong* ideology) and not enough literature.

I respect Doris Lessing; at her best she is a powerful myth-maker and diarist of the personal and social self. But ideas and observations are her forte, not language. In *The Good Terrorist* the ideas and observations seemed to me predictable, an unmediated reflection of the spirit of the times which perhaps accounted for the book's great success.

For me, the greatest literature resists prosaic ideological readings because its form and language is so far from everyday statement. It has a disturbing, questioning particularity which transcends and subverts ideology and makes crude categories like 'right' and 'left' irrelevant.

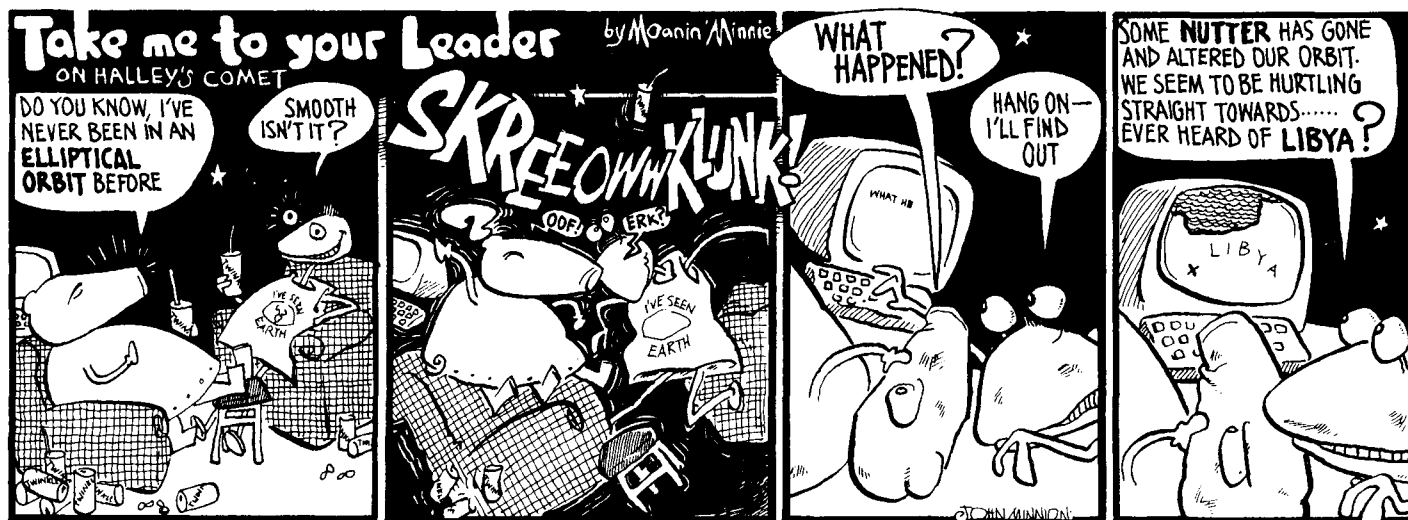
In any case, no kind of writing, great, middling or even journalistic, should be banned. Before Wheen invents too many left bogeys, he should recall that at present in these little islands it is not the Left who are trying to ban books and articles, in Gay's The Word bookshop and, indeed, the *New Statesman*.

This does not mean I think the Left can do no wrong. Francis Wheen's piece proves the truth of Doris Lessing's contention (in Wheen's own words) 'that some people on the Left can be . . . nasty, even (or perhaps especially) to their own comrades'.

What will remain of us is . . .

John Lynham, London N15

I read with great pleasure Francis Wheen's piece on Philip Larkin; poetry v. politics. I have loved the poetry for over 20 years: 'Nothing, and is



nowhere, and is endless' (from 'High Windows') is for me one of the many lines that have stuck.

But the politics? A solution I suggested to my sixth-form group in an obituary lesson recently is that poetry (and good art generally) comes from a deeper intelligence than politics. For most of us, although politics springs from a crude, irrational mix of familial prejudice, self-defining ideology and self-interest, our political allegiances and commitments don't really engage us fully. A general election result, or a Falklands war, might induce a brief euphoria or depression; but not the kind of liberating laughter or tears we experience in relationships with family, friends, loved ones — or in reading a good book.

Politics emphasises our differences; poetry our community. Poetry deals with things — love, death, work, time, family, environment — that matter; politics with things that don't. 'What will remain of us is love' writes Larkin, in 'An Arundel Tomb'. Poetry, like love, defeats death and disorder, with a knowing wink.

But you don't have to be unemployed, a pensioner, ill, young, gay, black, a miner, a teacher, a stockbroker to know that politics *does* matter — very much. Politics can be fatal. Will be. Unless.

A solution to this paradox would be welcome. Or a subscription to 'Red Wedge'.

Jew-baiting's not a 'diversion'

Paul Flowers, Kingston-upon-Thames

One need not agree with Manning Marable's confidence in the idea of a 'democratic socialist' — that is, Labour Party-style — opposition to Reagan in the US to disagree with the response from Lester Lewis (*NS* 13 December and 10 January).

What Farrakhan actually stands for is clear — Mr Lewis delicately steers around the points made by Professor Marable — and that is black, separate capitalism. The whole filthy business of capitalism will be replicated in all its minute details. No doubt a few black bankers, industrialists, politicians, crooks and hustlers will carve out a nice career but the millions of black workers in the US will not benefit one bit. Add to this the Jew-baiting, the bigotry and all the delights of religious obscurantism and we have a decidedly ugly programme.

Mr Lewis sees any criticism of Farrakhan's virulent anti-semitism as a 'diversion'. He has nothing to say about this central aspect of Farrakhan's programme. Does he agree with it?

Farrakhan's pro-capitalism and anti-semitism run together. Just like fascists who diverted anti-capitalist sentiments into pathological Jew-baiting in order for capitalism to survive, Farrakhan does much the same.

Seeing that the Labour Party in Britain has not only been unable to challenge racism, but due to its nationalist orientation been responsible for reinforcing chauvinism in the working class, I cannot see that a 'democratic socialist' set-up in the US will inspire much confidence, least of all among black workers. A genuine socialist movement which will challenge US capitalism and not just tinker with it is the only force that will unite black, white and indeed all workers, draw along other social groups and make some real advance. In its absence all we can expect is the flourishing of Rainbow Coalition careerists and Farrakhan-style reactionaries.

What a way to review a book

Patrick Wright, c/o Comedia, London W1

In his review of *What a Way to Run a Railroad* (*NS* 10 January) Christian Wolmar takes a sentence out of context, redesignating it an idiotic and puerile joke against 'typists'. He uses this as an excuse to suggest that the booklet might reasonably be interpreted as a work of 'nouveau misogyny' designed to attack the influence of feminism, ignore 'what women have been saying for 10,000 years' and reinstate capitalist hierarchy. Since this is closer to denunciation than criticism I hope I may be allowed to point out the following characteristics of our argument.

- 1) We explicitly state that *Railroad* doesn't speak for all experience or constituencies (hence the proposal of a series rather than a single volume pretending to say the last word — with the kind of spurious completion which Wolmar curiously also chides us for lacking).
- 2) We explicitly and repeatedly stress the male-orientated nature (right down to the military origin) of conventional management theory and practice, including a whole chapter on the manipulative reality underlying currently influential ideas of management.
- 3) We make extensive reference to the feminist impact from the early 1970s onwards and are quite explicit in basing much of our analysis on feminist 'classics' such as Jo Freeman's 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness'.
- 4) We explicitly reject the idea that any one form of management can be generalised across all varieties of organisation.

5) We explicitly state that the market is of limited capacity, needs political direction and that there are whole areas of social life to which market criteria should obviously not be applied.

Christian Wolmar is doubtless a good man and *Railroad* is certainly far less than perfect. But Wolmar's claim to know what lies 'implicit' in a text which is so different in what it says explicitly makes me wonder whether, when he wrote his review, he wasn't rather too busy looking over his shoulder. Back into line! Don't, for God's sake, tell anyone that there may be a few bodies buried back there. Long live mental permafrost!

Rough journalism

Leslie Moody, London SE3

Francis Wheen's somewhat sanctimonious defence of Martin Young and Peter Hill (*NS* 10 January) simply won't wash. Even if you rely only on what Young and Hill themselves have conceded, their interview with Anne Fitzpatrick, a not very sophisticated woman, was aggressive and intimidatory. The threat to discredit her, by whatever means, if she refused to give the answers demanded of her, came as dangerously close to extracting a 'confession' under duress as it is possible to imagine. I for one, though I do not believe that I am at all alone, am not prepared to condone in journalists interrogatory methods that I would condemn in the police.

The argument that rough tactics were justified in order that justice should be done is specious. The police can argue, and frequently do, that such tactics are sometimes necessary because, without a confession, the case against a guilty criminal would probably fail. In any case, it would appear that the reporters had already amassed sufficient evidence to provide an overwhelming case for Mycock's conviction to be reviewed. What did Miss Fitzpatrick's confession to perjury add to the programme other than to give it that extra ingredient of drama that I suppose every producer understandably seeks? That journalists have a right and a duty to investigate and to burrow for the truth is not seriously in dispute. What I cannot accept is that they have a right to treat the rest of us as mere performers.

Shifting sands

Peter Crystal, SDP Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, Leeds NE

Your ability to write a leading article on the likely course of political events during 1986 and the chances of the Labour Party (*NS* 3 January) without mentioning the words SDP, Liberal or Alliance indicates that, just like the party you support, you have your head in the sands. The key to the next election lies in the support that the Alliance obtains and this is surely a psephological fact, whether or not you or the Labour Party choose to admit it.

Did we change the world?

Naomi Mitchison, 115 Blenheim Crescent, London W11

I am hoping to write something about AWPA — The Authors' World Peace Appeal — which was active between 1952 and 1955. Would any authors who were in this organisation care to write to me? I am wondering whether all the work and worry which we put into it made any difference, either to world events or to ourselves as writers. I would ask those who answer if they would be willing for their views to be published.

NEW STATESMAN SUBSCRIBERS

We apologise to all subscribers for the unacceptably late delivery of last week's *New Statesman* (10 January). Copies were cleared as normal on Thursday 9 January through our mailing house; however, because of an unusually heavy volume of post going through the Croydon Post Office, which handles the *NS*, posting of the magazine was delayed by at least 24 hours and the Croydon Post Office have admitted that they were unable to provide our usual first class contract service.

The posting of this week's *NS* (17 January) will be closely monitored by Croydon Post Office and we ask all subscribers also to note when they receive this issue. If your copy arrives *later than Saturday 18 January*, please write to Joanne Hurst at the *NS*, or phone her on 01-253 2001.

IF THE CAPTION FITS . . .

FURIOUS ROWS over which were the best entries in our Christmas bumper issue news-picture caption contest! From the blood on the NS floor, from which the ideological purity collective had to be scraped up and carried off, three main prizewinners, each of whom gets an AKAI PERSONAL STEREO worth £69: **Nicholas Leonard**, of Lewes; **M. A. Booth**, of Coventry; and **Peter Womack**, of Somerset. Honourable mentions (a free 3-month NS sub each) to **M. Orford**, of Liverpool; **D. Lynch**, of Northolt; **Ernest Cox**, of Herts; **Katie Mallett**, of Essex; **Angus Robertson**, of W10; **John Brennan**, of N4. And hon. ments. also (£5 ABC cinema vouchers) to **Kathleen Butland**, of Devon; **Roy Pateman**, of Princeton (only he asks for the £5 to go to Eritrean relief: will do); **Jeff Prestridge**, Left-Wing Trendy; **Linda Swift**, of SE22; **Les Leeds**, of Bucks; **Tim Webb**, of NW5, for a nice one; **Paul Thompson**, of Lancs; **Steven Reid**, of Edinburgh; **Sara Spain**, of SE3; and — no laughter in the classroom please — **M. Minnie**, of Bangor.



'The catering staff have Aids' (Nicholas Leonard)
NB: This is an ideologically disgraceful joke



'Can't hear a thing — somebody must be talking to me' (Peter Womack)



'It's your treatment of contemporary revolutionary issues that one finds so stimulating' (A. Robertson)

'Oh look, Charles, it's another of those carbuncles' (M. Orford)



'Sh**, the elastic's gone at the crotch!' (Nicholas Leonard)



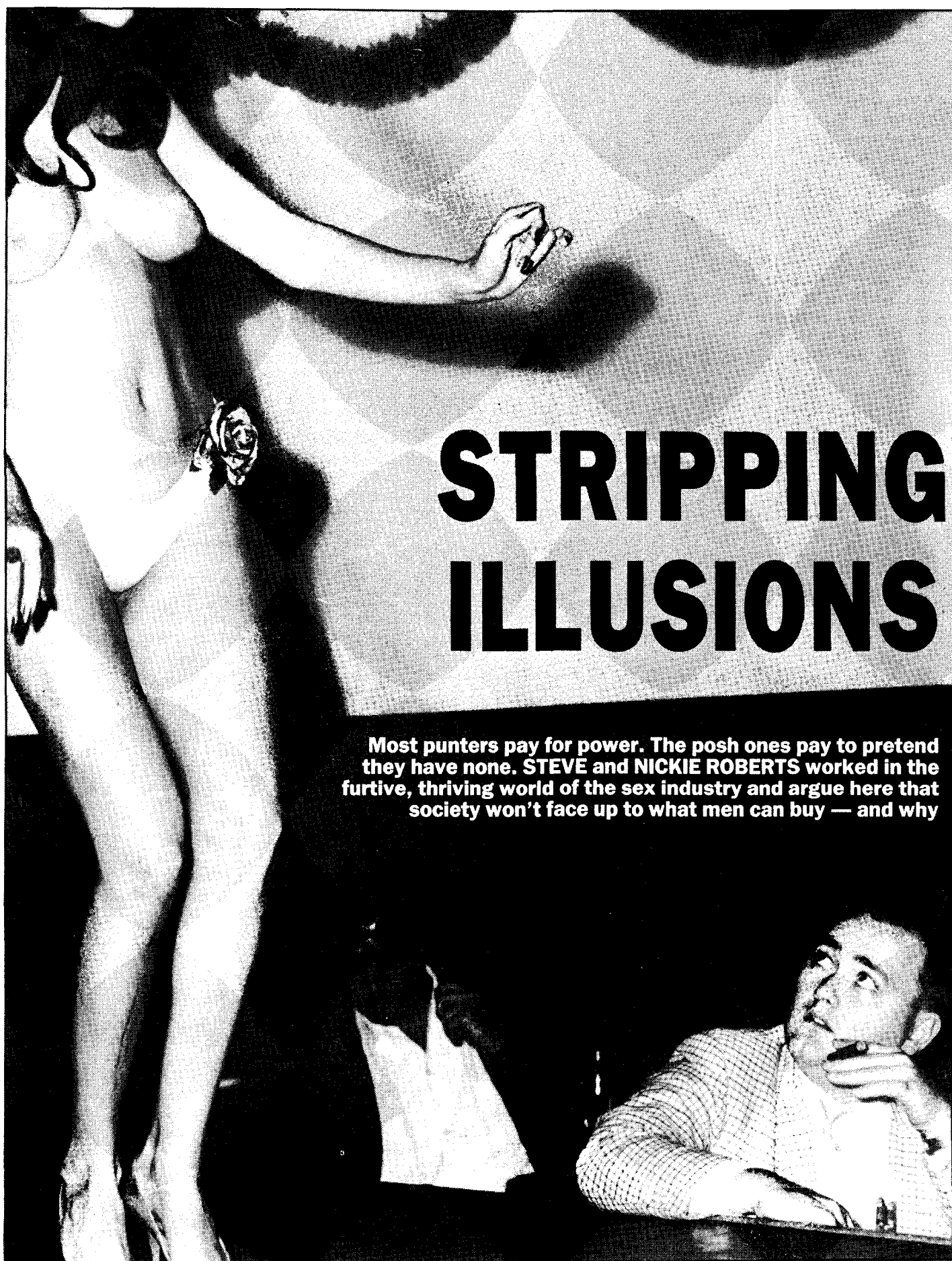
'All it takes now is a quarter-turn on the forearm, and the head falls off' (Peter Womack)

'These new suppositories should scare the sh** out of them' (D. Lynch)



'They're not talkin' again. Paul says he wants to be the eggman' (M. A. Booth)

Sorry we couldn't get in a sample caption from all our winners. One of the best was splendidly libellous — we'd all have been taken to the cleaners. There were some good ones too from those of you who aren't among the winners. Thanks for the laughs!



STRIPPING ILLUSIONS

Most punters pay for power. The posh ones pay to pretend they have none. STEVE and NICKIE ROBERTS worked in the furtive, thriving world of the sex industry and argue here that society won't face up to what men can buy — and why

Steve Roberts: THE PUNTERS

WHAT LIES BEHIND the silence of men on the Left about the sex industry? During the past decade at least many of us might have been expected to speak out in support of feminism's approach to it. We may talk about 'sex' a lot. But both the sex industry and the sexual hierarchy at large depend for their existence on men being secretive and silent about our own part in them. Perhaps we feel that we have too much to lose to make it worthwhile breaking our silence about the roles we play in the sexual order.

After all, who are the punters the sex industry caters for? Prostitutes and other sex industry workers are very clear: the overwhelming majority of punters are not old wankers in rubber macintoshes but 'ordinary' men. An hour spent standing outside a peepshow at lunchtime watching who goes in will show you that punters can be young middle-class trendies, businessmen, workers, intellectuals. Punterdom, viewed from inside the sex industry, expresses the sexual solidarity of men so emphatically that we really do appear as the monolithic oppressor represented in the feminist 'sex-class' line of theory. Men on the Left are not magically exempt from the punter category. As such, our lack of readiness to speak frankly about our sexual interests is disturbing.

I share these inhibitions. One reason is the lack of acceptable forums in which to speak. Few men want to expose their vulnerability in a national magazine especially when we find it so difficult to talk among ourselves. And the breast-beating of the confessional 'je m'accuse' is a dubious exercise at best. What I would like to do instead is share some of the experience I've gained from working as a strip club manager.

No one wants to give away any power they might have; there's no doubt that any analysis of the sex industry's exploitation of sexuality for profit is potentially subversive of male power and identity. It breaks the myth of a free exchange between buyers and sellers in the sexual market. In making our own analysis we run the risk of admitting that we enjoy (in every sense of the word) power over women and depend on it for our very social being. For example, a look at the way straight masculinity operates in the sex industry is very revealing about what it means to be a man.

BOUGHT SEXUAL ACTS are termed 'relief' in the language of the industry. It's hardly suggestive of pleasure. It hints at some dark duty, and perfectly captures the tense, furtive, compulsive flavour of the punter's activity. A man's sexuality is his burden, and in the sex industry for a simple no-strings cash transaction he can buy temporary relief from its weight.

A prostitute's cheapest service will be

'hand relief' — masturbating the client. But why go to a prostitute and pay for something that you could do yourself for nothing? Because it's the *scene* which is the whole point of bought sex. The presence of the woman reassures the punter that *he* isn't a 'wanker', because someone else is doing it for him. He pays for his unease to be her shame; she is female and a whore and thus an appropriate sex object. The sexual punter literally passes the buck.

Yet both hand relief and sexual intercourse with a prostitute are solipsistic rather than mutual sex acts. Punters often complain that full sex with pros is clinical — but they get what they pay for and nothing more. There's no human exchange, only a contractual exchange. The scene acts out the fantasy of a man and a woman indulging in their pleasure (particularly upmarket, where the woman is paid to fake enjoyment). In reality the punter must be wholly absorbed in subjecting his body to the fantasy to create any pleasure in the experience. What really happens doesn't coincide with the heterosexual ideal: it's a masturbation fantasy, but the punter cons himself by buying the illusion of a straight sex act. The con relieves him from the fear that he is perverse and from responsibility for relating to its real object: himself.

Male power in the relationship between prostitute and client may seem obvious, but it's in the strip-clubs and peepshows that the actual power relations are most visible. The peepshows reveal their stark theatrics.

The punter enters his cubicle, puts his money in the slot and a viewing-slit opens. As one client put it, '50p in the slot, beautiful girls dancing naked, who wouldn't?' It's the same principle as striptease, but the peeps have two great advantages: firstly, the punter can get a very close look at the female parts he's interested in, often by paying the woman extra to as good as climb through the viewing-slit with her legs apart, and secondly, thanks to the privacy of his booth, he has no need to masturbate in public. In the security of his private theatre, with his eye on the vagina and his hand on the penis, the punter rediscovers the biological signs of sexual difference, the origin 'in nature' of male power over women. It's actually the power content of the scene which triggers his arousal, a scene brought to life because *he* has the money to use the sex industry, and *she* has to work in it to make a living.

POWER AND PERVERSITY are intrinsic to straight masculine identity since the norm which brings them can only exist in relation to the 'anti-norm' of the perversions. The vicious double bind of masculinity is that in order to represent ourselves as the norm we have to continually stage imaginary deviations from it and repress them, setting ourselves up publicly

as the sexual policemen of society and privately playing out the role of erotic criminals.

For the men who most publicly represent straight power, the pressure of the split is greatest and the sex industry provides a space where they can act it out. This is nowhere more apparent than in the thriving specialist trade. The forms of sexuality which prostitutes and other sex industry workers cater for are various and often bizarre. There are the fetishists who haunt the clubs, paying extra for a close-up of a dirty foot or demanding that the woman smoke a cigarette before doing 'the naughty show'. There are men who like to dress as members of the blue-rinse brigade and sit around knitting and talking about washing powder. Some punters have to be dressed up as babies before they can get their rocks off, and of course there are those who enjoy being tied up, whipped, trodden on, burned, insulted, shat on. Most convenient of all for the prostitute, and most subversive in relation to straight social roles, are the 'slaves' — men who pay to dress up as women and do the housework, being ritually abused and punished for the least scrap of dirt remaining.

But the majority of specialist punters aren't 'out' in their everyday lives. Most of them are highly respectable members of society. Prostitutes estimate that of middle-class educated clients nine out of ten are into sado-masochism — SM. These men tend to be successful middle-aged professionals, judges, barristers, politicians, civil servants, military men, men with power over others, who come to the sex industry to play at powerlessness and degradation. It is a play exchange, for in straight society their power has real effects on *real* lives, whereas in a prostitute's park *they* can act out their fantasies of powerlessness without consequences to their social standing. For these men, there will always be a sex industry, and the secrecy it provides will be jealously protected.

Secrecy is also essential for the married men who use the industry (prostitutes estimate that 70-80 per cent of their clients are married). When their wives take on the familial roles of mothers, the men begin to feel their desires are getting too close to home and start looking round for younger, less psychologically charged substitutes. Paying anonymous prostitutes for their sexual services is a safe and acceptable alternative. For women, the danger of stepping out of line is far greater. They risk becoming identified in society's eyes with the women their husbands visit. They do not anyway have the access to sex which their husbands' greater economic power and moral hegemony brings them.

The generalised effect of the money men spend in the sex industry is to confirm and reproduce our powers: economic power,

sexual power, social power which in the first place is exercised over women, in the street, at work, at home. But this underlying fabric of sexual power is present in all our relations and this is why it's been so difficult to talk about. Sex is there between straight men too and the power relations which should be the real subject of our self-criticism are made to wait on the unravelling of sexual identities which may have decades of work invested in them, years of continual tension, controlled (and not so controlled) aggression, vigilance against the devils of queerness and wankerdom, and whatever else might threaten the security of our whited sepulchres.

Whether we are involved in buying sex on the market or not, the way profit and power intersect in the punter's pleasures can lead us to a greater understanding of how we gain as straight men in the set up of contemporary sexuality. With this in mind we can begin to move beyond our privileged position of willing or unwilling guardians of an oppressive hierarchy. □

Nickie Roberts: THE PROS

I STARTED WORKING in the Soho sex industry because I was broke and homeless, and also because West End life appealed to me more than the factory or Woolworth's. I was young, female, working-class, and on the lookout for adventure — the usual recipe for landing up in the sex industry ghetto, in other words. So for me in 1969, hitching down to London and becoming a stripper was a positive alternative to doing boring, badly-paid 'women's jobs' outside the home, or becoming a housewife.

Low pay or no pay; that's how I see it now, though at the time of course, I wouldn't have been able to articulate this. All I knew then was that I felt a damn sight more exploited as a bedspread machinist at Diana Cowpe's in Burnley, coughing up a lungful of candlewick fluff every night, than I did as a stripper in Old Compton Street. It was *my* life, I said to myself, and nobody was going to tell me what to do. Looking back, I see it was a Hobson's choice after all.

Nowadays things are much worse for the working-class than in 1969, thanks to the economic policies of Margaret Thatcher. As a result, there has been a massive upsurge of women and girls into all areas of the sex industry over the past few years, with a particularly large increase in the number of women working as prostitutes (a return to Victorian Values). And in a supposedly gentrified Soho, the clubs, peepshows, Nude Encounters are thriving. But then club bosses have always known that at times of economic stress the number of 'Girls' available for work rockets. You don't have to be a genius to work out the connection between women's poverty and our status as workers in the sex industry.

Status! That's a laugh . . . in return for

taking the one way out of the poverty trap, women who work in the sex industry are vilified by so-called 'straight' society, and regarded as contemptible slags (if I'd a pound for every time I'd had the word 'Slag' yelled at me, I'd be rolling in it now). Of course, the men who are our clients and customers, those paragons, remain untainted and anonymous. When a peepshow gets raided, the punters trot down the road to the next club, or else go home.

For the girls it's slightly different: we get marched off to West End Central, to be questioned, strip-searched, and so on. Prostitute women come off worst of all: routinely arrested then given massive fines which they can pay through one means only — more hustling (which is why they themselves say that the State is the biggest pimp of all). If they can't pay, they get prison sentences, and are labelled for life — criminals. It becomes a vicious circle.

To women in the sex industry, *these* are the real scandals — it's outrageous that a government first enforces economic policies of low pay and unemployment, forcing women on to the game in the first place, then goes on to penalise them for this market 'choice' by fining them, locking them up, and putting their children into 'care'. To my mind, the 'straight' world is much more bent than the underworld — at least with the latter you *know* you're dealing with crooks and villains. But hypocritical 'straight' society preys on and feeds off women in the sex industry, and when I say society, I include the Left and feminists.

From male socialists, the silence is deafening, apart from a few tentative efforts by some (mostly gay) men on the subject of male sexuality. This isn't enough. Men may think that by keeping quiet they're doing themselves a favour, but they are not; I've seen enough of them round the clubs and peepshows over the years to know. You can have a laugh with them sometimes, but mostly the girls think that punters are pretty stupid and pathetic or, as in the case of rowdy football crowds and the like, horrible, mouthy yobs. We see men's faces when they walk into a club or a peepshow booth — they have this fixed obsessive expression, as though they're on 'automatic pilot.' It can be quite chilling.

But it's not just in the sex industry that you see men as punters; it's rife in the straight world too. I personally think men should start asking themselves what it is that terrifies them so much about giving of themselves in their relationships with women. Working in the sex industry leads many of us to the conclusion that the only things men are capable of giving women at present are money and a hard time.

As for feminists — they have certainly done a lot of work on the subject of sexuality in recent years, much of it interesting; but the attitude of some groups, notably the

anti-porn lobby, has done little to gain the trust and confidence of women who work in the sex industry. We're fed-up with being called 'traitors' to the cause, or else designated 'victims'.

Some of us have also become increasingly angry about what appears to be a growth industry amongst radical feminist writers, film-makers, and such who gain career mileage out of our 'plight'. Not long ago it seemed that every third person you bumped into in Greek Street was a feminist researching for her PhD into prostitution or stripping. *She* would be middle-class, the writer; you, working-class, a stripper, were the research material, your life the object of study. It's a patronising relationship, and shows up the issue of class which is so often concealed by feminist analysis, all in the interests of sisterhood. Working in the sex industry is an issue of class, above all else: *when* are radicals going to recognise that?

I'M NOT PRETENDING that sex industry work is a bed of roses — it isn't. But those of us who do this work should not be denounced as traitors or victims. There's a rotten double-standard at work in the idea that it's somehow fine for a woman to slave away cleaning toilets for a pound an hour — that's not exploitation — but being a stripper or a pro is beyond the pale. I myself was once asked by a nice, middle-class feminist (very politely) why I didn't 'do anything — scrub floors, for instance?' rather than be a stripper.

The sex industry is a problem that will not go away for some time yet, no matter how much pressure is exerted on it from outside. All that will be achieved by anti-porn campaigners, whether Whitehouse disciples or radical feminists, will be more harassment and *blaming* of women sex industry workers. But we need support, not condemnation or silence. Support for the abolition of laws which make prostitute women criminals would do for a start.

I keep coming across the statistics that show how little money, property, economic power, women have throughout the world, and how much damned work we do. Nothing seems to change, really; women are still the world's poor. The sex industry exists all over the world, too, and it's flourishing. I think socialist and feminist women and men should finally make the connection between these two facts, and stop asking us: 'Why do you do it?'

Women who work in the sex industry are not sad, bad, or crazy; nor are we an exotic species apart. We are simply women who are struggling to live in a hypocritical society that uses our services whilst at the same time denying us our humanity. It's time we spoke up and were heard. □

Nickie Roberts in writing a book based on her experience in the sex industry, to be published by Grafton later this year.



Mary Evans Picture Library

Making boys of them

Alison Hennegan

From Brown to Bunter: The Life and Death of the School Story

P. W. MUSGRAVE Routledge £12.95

TOM BROWN'S SCHOOLDAYS (1857) was, we tend to be told, the first example of what would prove to be one of the 19th-century's most rapidly growing and influential forms of juvenile literature: the boy's school story. The books themselves might tell, supposedly, of a life lived by only a tiny percentage of the population but their imagined worlds proved potent to vast numbers of readers in Britain and throughout the Empire.

By the last two decades of the century, eager and envious sisters were devouring the tales for insights into their brothers' term-time lives. Lower-middle-class boys, whose own schooldays were spent in small, privately owned 'academies', found in these books' pages a glamorous vision of an eminently desirable, perpetually unattainable world. Teachers in Elementary schools used them as reading primers for the children of a newly literate working class. Boys throughout the colonies and dominions received them as school prizes.

There was, of course, other juvenile literature, notoriously the 'bloods', Penny Dreadfuls of such stomach-turning violence that at least one of their main publishers was regularly raided by the police. It was partly to combat the airy horrors of *Jack Harkaway* (created, incidentally, by a maverick Old Etonian) that the Religious Tract Society launched *The Boy's Own Paper* (BOP) in 1879.

Very quickly BOP could claim 600,000 weekly readers — men, women, girls, NCOs, errand boys, clergymen, servant maids and their Royal Highnesses, the Princes Edward and George of Wales, among them. Helping to hold them all was Talbot Baines Reed, a Congregational deacon and typographer, whose serials such as *The Adventures of a Three Guinea Watch* and *The Fifth Form at St Dominic's* (1881) both enthralled his readers and — so many commentators, including Mr Musgrave, argue — provided the basic formulae for the remarkable spate of boy's school stories which gushed for the rest of the century and went on gushing until the end of

the First World War when some, prematurely, declared the genre officially dead. In fact it lived on well into the 1930s, vigorous and voluminous enough, as Mr Musgrave himself tells us, for the *Times Literary Supplement* to devote a couple of columns to new titles in every Christmas Section until 1939.

This vast body of mainly minor literature is plundered constantly by the historians of education, sport, imperialism, class and ideology. It's far too enormous to exhaust and so diverse that generalisation is dangerous. Musgrave's new book (unlike Isabel Quigly's 1982 *The Heirs of Tom Brown*) is not primarily a literary undertaking. He is concerned to trace the rise, growth, decline and death of the boy's school story and to suggest some of the many possible factors which caused it.

Some concern publishing generally: the lifting of punitive taxes, the spread of literacy, faster and cheaper printing, quicker distribution, a growing Imperial market. Others concern children specifically: the discovery of the child reader as consumer. Most important of all are the causes rooted in the 19th century's preoccupation with Education in general and the much documented growth of the public schools in particular. Scores of new public schools were created and many of them immediately began a frenzied search for an instant tradition, an off-the-peg heritage. These were 'outsiders' on the way to becoming 'insiders': the sons of a rapidly expanding and rising middle class who were to be leaders, administrators and policy makers.

Whether or not the boy's school story was ever really their text-book is difficult to say. Certainly many authors hoped and believed so. Didacticism — overt, implicit, camouflaged — remained a constant feature of these works throughout the decades. *What* was taught changed often and Musgrave is fascinated by the apparent stability of a genre which in fact accommodated enormous shifts, reversals even, of value and attitude.

Tom Brown's (and Thomas Hughes's) patriotism, for instance, rooted as it is in a deep and knowledgeable love of rural England, bears no resemblance to the particular brand of mindless and aggressive chauvinism common by the end of the century. Dean Farrer, author of *Eric or Little By Little*, revered his Evangelical heroes for the tears they shed (evidence of souls well searched), but any fictional Housemaster of the 1890s would have been appalled by such unmanly weakness. He'd be rendered apopleptic by the kisses Eric and his little friends exchanged so freely only 40 years earlier.

Such was the resilience of the boy's school story as a genre that it could (like the institutions it depicted) accommodate not only change but attack: witness Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* (1899), Arnold Lunn's *The Harrovians* (1913) and Alec Waugh's *The Loom of Youth* (1917).

From Brown to Bunter is, says its author, a case study and one primarily concerned with the set of expectations linking readers and writers of boys' school stories and their 'middlemen': publishers, reviewers, librarians, parents and teachers directing reading, adults giving books as gifts or prizes.

Musgrave has chosen to concentrate on a handful of books each of which exemplifies important traits or innovations: *Tom Brown* and *Eric*, naturally; Anstey's *Vice Versa* (meant for adults, read by boys) which introduced magic and called parental bluff; Baines Reed's influential oeuvre whose subjects included day schools, private boarding schools, free schools and private tutors; novels of schoolboy love, such as H. A. Vachell's *The Hill* (1905) and E. F. Benson's *David Blaize* (1915); and 'protest' novels, such as Kipling's, Lunn's and Waugh's.

A very respectable if rather predictable collection which, on the whole, he deals with well. But most of them (Reed excepted) are quite as much adults' books as children's and all of them are recognisably 'literature', albeit minor. For 'boys' school stories' is an ambiguous phrase. Stories about boys, certainly. Often, but not invariably, by those

who were boys once. But stories for boys? Not always, including some of the best: Shane Leslie's *The Oppidan*, Simon Raven's *Fielding Gray*. The ambiguity — for or about? — has always bedevilled discussion of the genre. Many exemplars are really *Bildungsroman*, although Musgrave is unwilling to recognise their claim.

Where, I wanted to know, were the real writers of boys' school stories: the Horace Averys, R. A. H. Goodyears and Richard Birds (as in Dicky Bird, real name William Barradale-Smith). Where is Reginald Heber Poole (a.k.a. Austin Heber, Reginald Heber, Michael Poole and Anthony Thomas)? And what of Gunby Hadath and Hylton Cleaver? I ask not in order to show off, score cheap points or be a pain, but because these are the men boys read but grownups, usually, did not and all of them remained triumphantly in print long after the supposed death of the form. □

whose collection of short stories, *The Byzantine Riddle* (£3.50) and a novel, *The Untidy Pilgrim* (£3.95), have just come out from Methuen. These albums of lunatic adventures, half siesta fantasy, half mail-order catalogue, mostly in the dream city of Mobile on the Gulf of Mexico, are light-hearted relief after the Gothic horror of most Deep South literature. But, as with candied sweet potato, I find what is enjoyable as a side-dish too sticky and bloating for a permanent menu. Those who are intrigued by this growth of dead-pan, rococo farce as a way of handling such modern American paradoxes, insoluble to most Brits, as small-town businessmen who can frequent both brothels and Bible classes without hypocrisy, eat TV dinners while watching opera, fear materialism and adore free enterprise, should try instead James Wilcox's Spitting-Image morality tale *Modern Baptists* (Penguin, £2.95).

The continent is not all the USA, and Canadian writers seem often able to isolate the *bacillus Americanus* and let us watch its antics under laboratory controls. Alice Munro's *Something I've Been Meaning To Tell You* (Penguin, £2.95) recognises where the acid rain which falls on life and love, particularly among brave women who bruise easily, comes from and manages to remain a deadly-eyed, sharp-tongued analyst of what goes on along the border, metaphorical and literal.

There is no excuse for not keeping up with European, indeed world, literature today among those with access to a decent paperback book shop. I have enjoyed recently a P. D. James-style crime novel, *The Master Key* (Penguin, £2.95), where Masako Togawa sticks to the classic rules of the game, sets her snaking plot in and out of a realistic panorama of post-war Japan, with credible victims, villains and those who become both.

There are not many Dutch novels on many of our lists, but Cees Nooteboom's *Rituals* (Penguin, £2.95) is something that, in my experience, is almost unknown in literature. That is — an experimental parable, skipping about with the unities, playing tricks on the customer, which is also funny, vivid and often very sexy. Even the die-hard rationalist like me, who would rather die of a heart attack than admit the reality of a ghost, finds pleasure in a faint shimmer of the occult on the page. It runs all the way through the Australian novelist Barbara Hanrahan's *The Albatross Muff* (Chatto, £3.95), shading off into mental illness in a Victorian story of nightmare adolescence. It is no over-praise to suggest that this is the kind of domestic thriller Dickens might have tried if he had been allowed to free himself from the inhibitions about detailing sexual and commercial corruption of the young.

Novels in 1985, notably those by women, were increasingly better written and more uncompromisingly outspoken. The non-fiction disappointment of the year was *Flying Visits* (Picador, £2.95) by Clive James, someone who is rarely outspoken by anyone. I started with a bias against these travel pieces — can you credit a cultured human who asserts that the best reason for living on this planet today is the opportunity to hang around airports and travel everywhere in airliners? I

PAPERBACKS

A paradox, a paradox

Alan Brien

'*THE GREAT GATSBY* of my time' is Kurt Vonnegut's description of *Revolutionary Road* (£4.50), a balefully glittering saga of metropolitan dissidents in outer suburban exile during the Fifties, now published here for the first time in Methuen's always rewarding paperback fiction library. Since Vonnegut is the Vonnegut of my time, I followed his pointing finger. And I have to report back that the world of Richard Yates, an American writer previously unknown to me, richly deserves early discovery and exploration by British readers.

The somewhat plonking title turns out to be topographical not metaphorical. Its equivalent here might have been, with something of the same resonance, a Wain/Amis novel set on a new private estate just after the war and called 'Empire Close'. Yates, however, is much more locked in to regular sneak raids on the outposts of modern capitalism. His marooned couple, frequently going down for the third time scratching out each other's eyes, remind us of Updike's latter 'Rabbit' books. But the range and variety of people are much more (I'm glad to say) 19th- than 20th-century and a welcome change from the thinly inhabited anterooms of many European contemporaries. Yates is quite frighteningly accurate on lovers' quarrels and domestic tiffs that sour into vendettas while at the same time charting the external roller-coaster ride of opportunity and rejection, optimism and despair. (See also Grace Ingoldby, p. 32.)

'Irony' is the key word used by most admirers of Yates. I cannot help wondering — should irony be quite so near the surface that everyone trips on it? If I had to choose an American classic to match, it would not be *Gatsby* but a masterpiece that appeared a decade later, John O'Hara's *Appointment in Samarra* (Faber, £3.95). This wonderfully controlled, accurate, unsentimental piece of

anthropology dissecting the country club set of the Prohibition era has irony in its very blood stream, staining every paragraph. There is no sure way of telling who or what the author admires, recommends or condemns while under the spell of a prose that is at once judicial and impressionist.

America is a continent that allows several literary traditions and fictional vocabularies to flourish without being sucked into the twin whirlpools of New York and LA. One such eccentric regional laureate is Eugene Walter

Lines found on the back of an assignment schedule

Knute Skinner

Once again taking note as I cross the campus — of faces, legs, even the back of a shoulder — I reach in time Humanities 309, my quiet office.

There for thirty-five minutes I forget about women. I read through the day's mail and prepare a memo to be sent to the graduate dean.

But at two o'clock, in Humanities 108, as I question the class about the assonance in 'God's Grandeur' by Gerard Manley Hopkins, I especially mark the vital response of Vanessa and Kate.

also quickly tired of the mannerism, perhaps enforced by the need for free tickets, which fed the name of the airline into the opening sentence of almost every single article over a run of seven years. 'By courtesy of the British Airways Boeing 707 ... My Lufthansa Boeing 737 ... As the BA Tristar Stargazer Rose passed over ... My Pan Am Boeing 747 made landfall ... etc etc etc.' Can the *Observer* be quite that poor?

James is a genius at word-juggling and these high-colour postcards home glow in the dark. But this is part of the trouble — his style is often just too bright for the product he is selling, like slogans in a commercial. Unlike most admen, however, he is oddly insensitive to his own connotations. Consider this attempt to brighten up a cliché about the West raping the East — 'In the last century, they drugged her, stripped her naked, tied her hands above her head, and loved her as they pleased.' Like the pink cheeks of the apoplectic, such writing is not a healthy symptom. For his own good, James needs a frequent dulling down by an experienced word-doctor. □

HM rebels

Peter Tatchell

The Days Of The Good Soldiers

RICHARD KISCH *Journeyman Press* £5.95

RICHARD KISCH'S book on the role of Communists in the British armed forces during the Second World War resurrects a forgotten, and hitherto largely undocumented, chapter in Labour movement and military history.

In 1939, the army was very much a conservative force for the preservation of Empire. As the war progressed, however, the 'blimps' were pushed aside and the armed services developed an increasingly democratic and anti-fascist character. *The Days Of The Good Soldiers* is the story of this political transformation whereby for 'the first time since the days of Oliver Cromwell's Roundheads and the Parliamentary Army of 1646, Agitators, the nominated representatives of the lower ranks, were abroad in the 1940s. There were political discussions, debates, lectures galore. Model "parliaments" were being convened.'

Drawing on the experiences of two dozen Communist war veterans, Kisch focuses primarily on events within the British armed forces stationed in Egypt, Greece and India. In Cairo, the 'Old Comrades', who met secretly under the guise of the Music Appreciation Society, played a pivotal role in the production of *KD* — The Middle-East Forces Anti-Fascist Monthly — and in the establishment of the Soldiers' Parliament.

Though the model Parliament originally began fairly uncontroversially as little more than a debating society, when troops voted overwhelmingly in favour of sweeping nationalisation senior officers intervened and accused its organisers of rigging the result. To

refute these allegations, the Parliament agreed to hold a mock general election. To everyone's surprise, a joint Labour-Communist slate won a runaway victory with 119 votes, compared to 55 for Common Wealth, 38 for the Liberals and only 17 for the Tories. A pre-war Labour councillor, Private Harry Solomons, was elected 'Prime Minister' and proceeded to call for the nationalisation of the banks, mines, land and transport; plus decolonisation and an alliance with both the USA and the USSR. A similar experiment in Greece resulted in the setting up of the Heliopolis House of Commons where soldiers also elected a Labour 'government' and established a five-man State Planning Commission 'to apply Socialist principles to all spheres of government activity'.

At Deolali, following the Royal Indian Navy mutiny and the huge anti-British street demonstrations in which 270 people were shot dead by General Lockhart's troops, the stunned Forces' Parliament passed a resolution of solidarity calling for immediate Indian independence. Kisch also records the wave of frequently successful strikes involving thousands of servicemen at Kallang in Singapore, Cawnpore in India, Kluang in Malaya and Tel-el-Kebir in Egypt. The strikers' grievances included dissatisfaction over poor camp conditions, delays in demobilisation and disagreement with Britain's support for the Dutch suppression of the Indonesian National Liberation Movement led by Dr Soekarno.

Despite all these valuable insights, *The Days Of The Good Soldiers* left me feeling a little disappointed. Aside from its sometimes confusing and achronological structure, the book falls short of the definitive history which one might have expected. While some incidents are retold in excessive detail, others are not mentioned at all — the disbanding of the 15th Royal Fusiliers for public anti-fascist agitation; the Selevang Soldiers' Parliament and the East-West Society in Singapore; the nascent plot for a military coup against Churchill in the event of the Tories being re-elected in 1945; and the part played by British soldiers in giving the Malayan Communists (who had been our wartime allies against Japan) advance warning of impending British attacks, thereby enabling them to shift base camps and arms caches.

Given that Kisch's book revolves around the

theme of a 'People's War Against Fascism', another surprising omission is any mention of the person who pioneered this theme — Tom Wintringham. A founder member of the Communist Party, he had been captain of the British Battalion of the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War. As the architect of a 'People's War' strategy for the defence of Britain and the liberation of Europe, Wintringham was arguably Britain's most innovative military theoretician and no serious history of Communists during the last war can ignore his unique contribution as a socialist and military strategist. □

In a new light

John Lucas

W. H. Auden

STAN SMITH *Basil Blackwell* £12.50 & £3.95

THE GENERAL RECEPTION of *Rereading Literature*, this new series of critical monographs under the general editorship of Terry Eagleton, has been as predictable as it's been depressing. From the cries of horror that have gone up you'd think that rereading literature wasn't something we all do, all the time. And, after all, the series' running title does stress *literature*, which ought at the least to guard against the perfectly reasonable complaints of those, like myself, who detest the arrogance of contemporary critics when they claim to be 'crossing over' and 'usurping' the hitherto 'privileged' literary 'text'. If it hasn't done so this may have something to do with the amount of jargon that's offered as a guarantee of 'rigorous' or even 'scientific' critical proposal and analysis. When you are doing something genuinely new you clearly need a new set of terms in which to do it, but the worth of what you're doing can't rest merely on the fact that you've learned the new language. (Anyway, as Lisa Jardine has suggested, there's something decidedly macho about all this 'scientific rigour'.) Rereading Literature inevitably means rewriting criticism, but some critics are more equal than others, and it can't be denied that among the early products of Eagleton's series are some

FICTIONS

are the extraordinary stories of Jorge-Luis Borges, sometimes in the form of condensed novels or reviews of imaginary novels, sometimes dream metaphors of our lives. 'Highly concentrated, weirdly logical, occult, flat, nightmarish, beautifully carpentered' — *The Guardian* (£3.95). From Marguerite Duras, two novels, love stories, feminist views of life, *Little Horses of Tarquinia* (£4.95) and *The Sailor from Gibraltar* (£5.95), both reissued. Nietzsche called Gottfried Keller's *Green Henry* (£9.95) the greatest 19th century novel: in over 700 pages, the great Swiss writer creates an artist's life in an epic world classic. Storm's *Immensee*, Büchner's *Lenz* and Keller's *Village Romeo and Juliet* in one volume make up *Three German Classics* (£3.95).



JOHN CALDER * 18 Brewer Street * London W1R 4AS

THE FLANDERS ROAD

is the masterpiece of Nobel Prize winner Claude Simon, set in the last war when the death of a cavalry officer triggers off a series of associations from the past and the grim present dilemma of the officer's valet (£5.95). 'For his sheer visionary power and for his humour, I admire William Burroughs more than any other living writer,' said Ballard in *The Guardian*. His *Adding Machine* (£10.95) is his important collection of essays and reminiscences. For the musical, Stendhal's *Life of Rossini* (£7.95), a major classic, and Morike's *Mozart's Journey to Prague* (£2.95), are again available. Frank Webster's *New Photography* (£4.95) is the first sociological and political view of a powerful, but dangerous, art form.

real stinkers.

Stan Smith's *W. H. Auden* is a very different matter. I disagree with some of his rereadings, I think he occasionally ignores — or perhaps slides away from — problems to do with later Auden; and the last 50 or so pages are almost indigestibly crammed. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that this is far and away the best critical study of Auden that has yet appeared. It is for the time being indispensable, because it does what Frank Kermode's even shorter study of *Wallace Stevens* did for a previous generation: it makes sense of a great poet by showing how he can properly, if not definitively, be read.

Writing about 'The Orators', Smith remarks that 'the speaker of the Address does not present a unitary speech because the culture which utters him is itself not unitary, but a web of contradictory discourses'. This, or something very like it, is how Smith sees Auden the writer, and it explains why he says that 'All Auden's discoveries of the artifice of cultural identity, the source of that anthropological interest that runs through his work, occur at moments of dislocation.' Being an 'English' writer is therefore necessarily complicated, and Auden's recognition of this puts him at the opposite pole from the Arnoldian view of the poet, one which is still endorsed by cultural orthodoxy, where the poet is above the battle, urbanely poised and able to deliver definitive judgment on all that passes beneath him. The poet, Arnold said, must banish from his mind 'all feelings of contradiction, and irritation, and impatience'. In Smith's rereading, Auden emerges as a poet whose work is both about and an embodiment of precisely those contradictions which express a non-unitary culture.

Out of this emerges, among other things, a brilliantly resourceful and witty account of 'September 1, 1939', and the best case I know for Auden's leaving England. It does not, however, convince me. 'For any decent radical in the thirties', Smith says, 'England was not a *patria* to be proud of but a burden of betrayal, shame and perfidy'; and he quotes a letter to Spender written in 1941 in which Auden remarks that 'the intellectual warfare goes on always and everywhere, and no one has the right to say that this place or that time is where all intellectuals ought to be.' I'm more bothered by this than Smith is. For you can't choose your time as you choose your place and surely there's a question to be answered as to whether in 1939 America could be the place for any 'decent radical'. (Did only the indecent ones choose to stay in England?) Smith is aware of the problem here, and he argues that Auden's Christianity is 'a translation into a new discourse of those impulses which lay behind his thirties writing, a resistance to temporal power in all its forms, whether it is exercised by the thugs and bureaucrats of Hitler and Stalin, or the managers and manipulators of a supposedly democratic mass society "soiled, profaned, debased" by McCarthyism.'

Maybe so, but I don't think that Smith always — or convincingly — explains the later Auden's revisions and suppressions of his earlier work: and he stays silent about Auden's championing of American involvement in

Vietnam. He does so, I think, because he wants to save Horatian Auden from the charge of having withdrawn from the smoke of the marketplace, where Arnold thought no poet belonged; but for all the sophistication of Smith's argument I'm not sure that this can be done. I accept his account of 'The Shield of Achilles', and I'm greatly impressed by the sheer cleverness of his argument for late Auden; but in the end I still find myself nodding agreement with Randall Jarrell's remark that much of the later work suggests 'a rhetorical mill grinding away at the bottom of limbo'. Still, if anyone can persuade me I'm wrong about this it will be Smith. New rereaders start here. □

FICTION

American blues

Grace Ingoldby

The House of the Solitary Maggot

JAMES PURDY *Peter Owen* £11.95

White Noise

DON DELILLO *Picador* £9.95

Young Hearts Crying

RICHARD YATES *Methuen* £9.95

'I WISH I COULD call her a whore', Mr Skegg says of Lady Bythewaite in *The House of the Solitary Maggot*, 'but she is so far worse. A whore after all only tempts men's bodies. She will only settle for their souls.' Mr Skegg has taken a battering at the hands of Lady B. and, despite his money, name and position, is reduced to a walk-on part in the story of their life at Prince's Crossing — once a town, once a village, now merely a few fine houses — as told by this monstrous woman into the whirling spools of a tape recorder.

Lady B. edits her own life with abandon, skipping the worst cyclone in history, 'either she had forgotten it or found in it something too near herself to recognise. One great force refusing to acknowledge the prerogative of another' and concentrates on her illegitimate sons by poor old Skegg, none of whom has provided a straight five minutes of either comfort or joy. Aiken Cusworth, the favourite, was a Heathcliff look- and live-alike given to reckless horse-riding and banging his fists into wooden doors until the skin hangs down to his wrist; Clarence, who inherited his mother's talent for melodrama, changed his name to become a star of the silent screen, wearing rouge, lipstick and spending far too much time in a dressing gown; and Owen loved them both to his own quite terrible cost.

Domestic drama is orchestrated by her ladyship, taking opium, writing letters of 'frantic appeal', periodically prostrated, eating like a horse, seducing quite at random but never quite exhausting her dear self. The creation of this woman, who could win an old trout contest fins down, has inherent dangers and she all but upstages this novel which racks from one melodrama to another as she

records the comings, goings and goings-on of her brood. It is, however, a thoroughly original and enjoyable read set in a landscape where character and place are perfectly matched: the long hallways 'for desperate and serious conversations'; 'the soft purling waters of the lake' beyond the room in which the tape relentlessly records.

Purdy's domestic dramas are timeless and in complete contrast to those enacted in *Blacksmith*, a town of opticians and drycleaners with a college on the hill, the setting of Don Delillo's *White Noise*, a story very much of 20th-century American Blues. Delillo's mannered style, where talking to one's wife becomes 'a form of self-renewal and a gesture of custodial trust' is deliciously infectious, his family — the Professor of Hitler Studies, his fourth wife and children from various marriages — spend most of their time in their kitchen analysing the extent to which they feel jostled by events. There is something ominous in the splendour of the *Blacksmith* sunset, TV and radio feed them terrifying data and Daddy and Mummy are secretly 'up front' terrified of death. All of them are hooked on disaster just as long as it happens somewhere else, preferably California... 'mud slides, brush fires, coastal erosion, earthquakes, mass killings... we can relax and enjoy these disasters because California deserves what it gets... California invented the concept of lifestyle. This alone warrants their doom.'

The portents of doom, which read like pages from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, are well founded. An 'airborne toxic event' hits *Blacksmith*, releasing among other things a spirit of imagination in the population who, 'begin to marvel at their own ability to manufacture awe.' This is a very funny book where the supermarket with its dazzling hedgerows plays Mama and TV takes its rightful place as a timeless force in the American home, an object that, 'welcomes us into the grid... sealed off, self-referring'. Delillo's fascination with the 20th-century landscape is roughly love/hate; America bewilders them, they suffer, but could they exist anywhere else?

Richard Yates is good at bad couples, sad, sour marriages, young hopes corroded by suburban life and his two novels now available here, the classic *Revolutionary Road* in paperback (see Alan Brien, p. 30) and the new *Young Hearts Crying* are awash with Bourbon and bitter tears. *Revolutionary Road*, hailed by Tennessee Williams and others as a masterpiece and classic when it first appeared in 1961, cuts both men and women down to size and it's hard to think of anyone who can catch the bitter twang of married argument or its setting quite so well. *Young Hearts* ends with its female heroine saying 'Fuck art and fuck psychiatry'; it follows its couple for longer — through further disastrous couplings — and rambles too much to have the impact of the first. Here too, American ideas of masculinity, the trading of punches at a party, are ripped apart and alcohol (one character has a whisky spigot installed in the wall of his room) does nothing to ease the pain. These are bitterly perceptive books, depressing but difficult to put down. □

Shorter reviews

Poland Under Black Light

JANUSZ ANDERMAN

Readers International £7.95 & £3.95

The end of Solidarity as a legal entity in December 1981 signified not only the destruction of hopes for the internal democratisation of communist rule in Poland. At a more profound, intangible level it also extinguished the major advances that had been made towards human decency. Janusz Anderman's short stories, all set in post-1981 Poland, are utterly bleak in their depiction of a country which is rapidly becoming more enigmatic by the day. The message is that Jaruzelski has won, but what sort of society has he created? One without trust, without hope, without human communication beyond lies and accusations. Anderman's Warsaw is a city without names, streets without focus, incidents lacking any meaning beyond a nagging angst. The final story is 'Postscript — 1985: Empty . . . Sort of . . .', in which two men enter a police building for interrogation. They sit waiting for hours until, finally, someone tells them to go — no questioning today as 'I'm quite snowed under'. As they sit one of them recalls a spell in jail, when an academic from a Poly was hauled in, eager to meet 'this academy of the opposition'. But instead of finding heroes, he finds men 'Who'd wanted to hang grafters now giving bribes to the man in charge of the baths'.

There are two types of unsayable things in Poland today. One is that the regime has been anything less than totally awful, the other is that the opposition has been anything less than absolutely wonderful. Anderman's stories give no comfort to anyone. They condemn the regime but — and this will lose him support — they also point the finger at those who gave their blessing to Solidarity without actually realising that genuine support entails changing one's own inner self. If these stories have a thematic unity, it is how little Solidarity changed the hearts of ordinary Poles — a depressing and thoroughly unpopular view among those still in the forefront of active opposition.

Not all the stories are good, and sometimes the translation is poor because it is too literal. Anderman deserves better than this, not least concerning the absence of footnotes — many references will simply be too obscure for anyone ignorant of Poland and recent events there. But at his best he has an honest and powerful voice, one which should be attended to because he undercuts the lies of one side and the mythology of the other.

Gary Mead

Freedom at Work: Towards the Reform of Tory Employment Laws

LORD (BILL) MCCARTHY *Fabian Society* £2

'Trade union democracy' was a Conservative slogan until they actually tested it. So far 2.7 million trade union members have voted by 5 to 1 to finance the Labour Party, in a series of ballots required by the 1984 Trade Union Act.

Union members don't like the government's trade union laws; but paradoxically it was one of those new laws which gave them the chance to express this view. This alone should suggest that the Labour Party needs to do more than promising simply to repeal the Tory laws.

In his polite and unassuming way, Bill McCarthy chides those who say that all that's needed is to rephrase the pre-Thatcher position in terms of 'positive rights' instead of 'negative immunities'.

It's true that the limited immunity from prosecution for, say, breach of contract which trade unions enjoyed before the Trade Union Act could easily be misrepresented by the Tories as putting unions 'above the law'.

But there are two areas in particular where to 'repeal the Tory laws', however presented, is just not enough: picketing and the closed shop. McCarthy has the unnerving knack of picking up old ideas and cutting through a lot of the ideological baggage which they've picked up in recent history.

On the closed shop, he returns to the idea of 'service payments'. Workers who won't join the union could pay the equivalent of union dues to a charity of their choice, thus allaying the fears of union members that they are getting the benefits of union-negotiated pay and conditions for nothing.

This was the proposal offered — with strings attached — by Edward Heath's Industrial Relations Act in 1971, and it has been tainted by the bitterness which followed ever since.

His proposals on picketing are perhaps less convincing, involving the police in administering a limited 'right to stop vehicles' on behalf of pickets. But he attacks Conservative policies with an inventive eloquence. Thinking Lefties should read this very Fabian tract.

John Rentoul

Powers and Liberties

JOHN A. HALL *Blackwell* £19.50

In contemporary historiography every new factor-discovery not only expands the complexity of existing models, but also tends to revalue existing terms. Karl Marx insisted that economic determinism was the true motor of historical change. Max Weber, as historian, set greatest store by the role of ideology, in particular Protestant ideology as the cue for the birth of European science, which in turn cued the industrial revolution. John A. Hall is less certain. Politics, economics and ideology, he writes, each had their moments of autonomous impact; but his book (subtitled 'The Causes and Consequences of the Rise of the West') is rather a record of the combinatoriality of different factors, to the extent that the 'historical sociology' which he offers frequently approximates to a species of 'catastrophe' theory. Marx and Weber are beacons guiding him out of port, but they are also a form of Scylla and Charybdis. More reliable are the sails of his vessel, stitched from the eclectic empiricism of Gellner, Aron and Barrington Moore.

At first Dr Hall's account seems perilously disjuncted. Why did the civilisations of China, India and Islam *not* allow for autonomous dynamic economic development as happened in Europe? And then he asks, how was it that the Western 'miracle' did take place? But this changeability, even reversability, of accent is at the core of his study. In particular Hall stresses that the European 'take-off' depended on the existence of a civil polity (Christendom) that preceded and constrained the emergence of strong states, while the plurality of these Christian states enabled and fostered an all-important viable competitiveness. However, the conjunction of capitalism and liberties which Hume and especially Adam Smith greeted as a prerequisite for dynamic wealth is not a prerequisite for economic development in the contemporary world. Modern states enjoy one advantage that Europe never had, namely the example of Europe itself. The consequence of this is that, within an intentional international setting, liberal values and liberal practices are always likely to become disabling where once they had been enabling. An important strand in Hall's recipe is the absence or overcoming of 'social blockages' as a precondition for economic success. But he is not doctrinal (as Marx certainly

was) as to what constitutes a social obstruction.

Dr Hall's argument, or rather arguments, are a great deal more subtle than can possibly be hinted at here. Yet despite its historiographic sophistication, *Powers and Liberties* deserves the wide readership its forthcoming publication by Penguin implies. It is at once a brilliant demonstration of the descriptive penetration of historical sociology, and a warning against its more prescriptive excesses.

Justin Wintle

The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street

NIGEL CROSS *Cambridge* £25

It's a tough freelance who can peruse *The Common Writer* without experiencing pangs of unease. Nigel Cross's subject is the social and economic conditions which affected 'representative authorship' and publishing in the 19th century, and the instances of hardship he has assembled, coupled with the knowledge that prospects for the scribbler today are (relatively speaking) little better, can make even retraining as an accountant seem — temporarily, at least — an enticing career move.

Cross mainly cites authors who were well known without being top-notchers, and wholly or chiefly dependent on their literary earnings. The period's most successful figures — both the enduring great and the merely once-celebrated — and those who enjoyed private incomes are mentioned only insofar as they influenced the workers of the literary world. Outside that prosperous élite, the writing life was a hazardous enterprise. Few avoided spells of indigence (which, until 1838, could lead on to debtors' prison); even someone as popular as Ouida faced financial difficulties late in her career. In response, an 'informal welfare state' of supportive institutions developed, centred on the Royal Literary Fund and the Civil List, underpinning (albeit skimpily) the whole business of literature as it expanded throughout the century. At the same time, bohemianism came to prevail among 'common writers' since it elevated their unconventional (i.e. impecunious) lifestyle into a mark of artistry.

Cross identifies working-class and women writers as having been especially vulnerable to misfortune: they usually lacked the education and social status necessary to get ahead in a predominantly middle-class, male domain. In particular, they were largely excluded from literary journalism, an important new source of income for the common writer from mid-century onwards. Cross is at his most trenchant when supplying the potted biographies of umpteen such underdogs: case after case of talent stifled by chronic neglect or the obligation to write quickly and often. This book should be read by anyone who opposes subsidies for literature. Aspiring writers, on the other hand, might be wise to give it a miss.

David Montrose

BE MY GUEST — Bill Eburn

A progressive account of an ex-Japanese P.O.W. in the Philippines and Japan. p/b £2.70, h/b £6.00, 116pp

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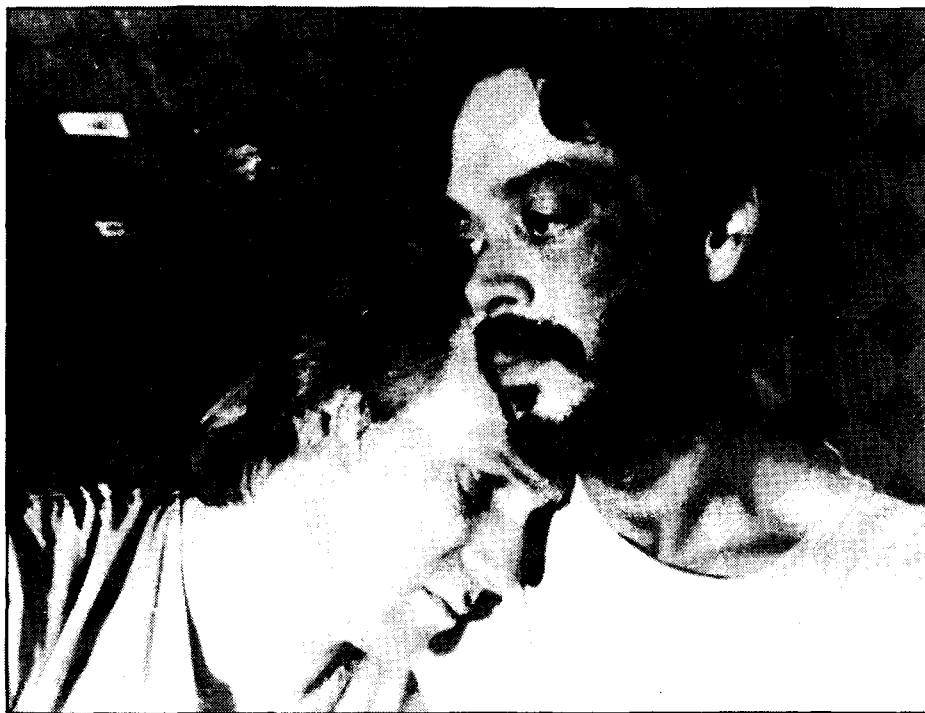
The history of an experimental socialist commune in North Tyneside in the 1890s. p/b £2.79, h/b £6.60, 64pp
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FILMS

As time goes by

John Coleman

A kind of loving for Molina (William Hurt) and Valentin (Raul Julia) in *Spider Woman***Kiss of the Spider Woman** (15)*Lumiere; Screen on the Hill; Gate, Notting Hill***Re-Animator** (18)*Screen on the Green; Cinecenta; Odeon, Kensington***Death Wish 3** (18)*Cannon, Haymarket; Prince Charles*

HECTOR BABENCO, born in Argentina but long settled in Brazil, director of the 1980 *Pixote*, a strong melodrama about juvenile delinquents, resolved in 1981 to make a movie out of another Argentinian's best-selling novel, **Kiss of the Spider Woman** by Manuel Puig.

Babenco had originally hoped to get Burt Lancaster to play the incarcerated homosexual window-dresser Molina in this strange work: what *that* film would have been like has the mind fairly boggling. But, then, so does the extraordinary affair he and his scriptwriter Leonard Schrader have drawn from the Puig fiction. By all accounts, that tale of a fantasy-spinning gay sharing a cell in some unnamed South American country with a tortured political activist Valentin not only carried long, scholarly footnotes on the nature of homosexuality but had dreaming Molina recounting the plots of a handful of movies, *I Walked with a Zombie* and *Cat People* among them: it was very rich in thematic ironies of identification and political undertones. (Readers may already have spotted a kind of irony here, in that Leonard Schrader's brother

Paul directed a re-make of *Cat People*.) To inspissate matters further, Puig himself reduced his novel to a stage play, performed over here last year. Without benefit of having read the book or seen the play, I can only conjecture that this second re-working of the ur-novel may have lost a couple of things: the density of literature and the immediacy of theatre. There were times when matters on screen seemed to slip disquietingly out of focus: or, better, when it became hard to hold on to a centre, some governing notion. And, yet, for all the whiff of red herrings, this is no occasion to cry stinking fish.

Best, perhaps, to hang on to the superbly played shifting and affecting relationship between Molina (William Hurt), swanning around the flaking cell in a floral peignoir — a bit like a refugee from something by Tennessee Williams — and stocky, bruised Valentin (Raul Julia), caught while handing his passport over to an old, fleeing revolutionary leader. The two inmates are poles apart and much of the mesmeric attraction belongs to willowy Molina's insistent retailing of a beloved film, what sounds like a Goebbels-inspired *Casablanca* and what in fact *looks*, magnificently, like a hammy Forties thriller about French Resistance and betrayal. As Molina relates this appalling weepie, with a cabaret singer Leni (Sonia Braga) falling for the Nazi boss she has seduced for a key map, whole passages of it are intercut in black-and-white verging on sepia, with odd spots of reduced colour, red, green: presumably this is how angry, reluctant Valentin reconstructs it, since one of the two

women he loved on the outside, rich Marta (seen in flashback) is also played by Braga. (She is to crop up a third time as the briefly glimpsed Spider Woman of the title, when Molina encapsulates his love for, and deception of, Valentin in a quick anecdote of this islanded mystery woman and a shipwrecked sailor.)

For Molina, on the promise of freedom, has been set on by the prison warden to worm himself into Valentin's confidence, justifying the treachery as preferable to renewed torture for his cell-mate; has tenderly cleaned him when poisoned food makes him foul himself and, the night before his departure, has sexually wooed and won 'the real man' of his dreams, Valentin, in a scene of discreet and credible love-making.

On the outside, Molina is to attempt to pass a message for Valentin, fatally. Back inside, floating on morphine after another beating-up, the sailor/Valentin rows off with his liberating Spider Woman/Marta. This is 'pure cinema', if you will, and frankly hokum. And a deal of the seductiveness of Babenco's procedures lies in cineastic pleasure at the excellence of that Forties pastiche. Where *that* has teeth comes in Valentin's incredulous, politically alert reaction to the plot that romantic, frivolous Molina is blindly dishing out: 'Can't you see this is a fucking anti-Semitic film?' he barks. And although we get a few opened-out prison corridor sequences, with a manhandled newcomer (that passport escapee) shoved in an adjoining cell, the emphasis is pretty firmly away from out-and-out brutality, reserved rather for fantasy and the business of how love will find a way, even in the most unpromising circumstances. There it is directed and acted to the hilt.

Charles Addams's Fester would be the ideal audience for **Re-Animator**, a sick, gore-spewing, surgical romp: giving head gets a new meaning. As for Michael Winner's **Death Wish 3**, if the price of street freedom is Bronson's eternal vigilante, forget it. □

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

A Chorus Line Richard Attenborough's valiantly rewarded and rewarding shot at screening the impossible: an audience-participation stage musical. Choreographically updated by Jeffrey Hornaday, it combines exuberant dance, a good song or three, with edgy dialogue. Showbiz loving itself, but for once so what? (Vicki Frederick, Audrey Landers).

Defence of the Realm Fumes of menace rise from David Drury's corrosive if erratic political chiller, written by Martin Stellman, reflecting current home-based concerns. Hoodwinked into disgracing awkward MP, tabloid reporter redemptively opens can of worms as Special Branch hovers (Gabriel Byrne, Denholm Elliott, Greta Scacchi).

Nineteen Nineteen Hugh Brody's subtle, low-key first feature, magnificently played, mounted and edited: brief encounter in 1970 Vienna of ageing ex-patients of Freud — resident White Russian émigré Paul Scofield and naturalised New Yorker Maria Schell — for thorny, maybe therapeutic survivors' duologue deftly conjuring with Time and History.

MUSIC

Body snatching

Jon Savage

Can a courtroom drama, plus media nostalgia, bring Punk Rock back from the grave?

EXACTLY TEN years ago this week, the Sex Pistols were still gate-crashing other people's concerts and hustling for a living. They were a good idea trying to get started; in the words of a cod sleeve note of the time, they were 'raw unexposed and latent'.

In the middle of 1979 — after seven Top Ten hits and nigh on a million pounds — they ceased to exist as anything more than an item on a Receiver's balance sheet. Yet at the time of writing, the corpse is being exhumed in the High Court, as the two principal protagonists, John Lydon and Malcolm McLaren, have flown across the Atlantic to face each other through their lawyers.

The emotions aroused by the Lydon v. Glitterbest case and its counter action are not the only unfinished business of Punk Rock. The Punk virus — even if some of its former victims might wish otherwise — still has some life to it. 1986 has begun not only with the latest — and perhaps last — round in a complicated set of legal actions, but a flurry of interest in the tenth anniversary of Punk Rock, as a trickle of retrospectives and overviews in the music/style press begins to swell to a flood. The cyclical guilt begins again: ten years ago, people would say, 'Where are the new Beatles?' Now they say, 'Where are the new Sex Pistols?'

The willingness of white pop culture to get involved again in Punk is partly due to the vagaries of fashion: the clothes and records haven't been seen or heard for a while and the time seems right to dust them off. As far as this goes, we could be talking about platform shoes — an abortive revival of which foundered two years ago — or glam rock. Yet the very interest shown in Punk points to a perceived lack in today's white pop. What is there in the past that isn't here in the present?

One good answer was suggested to me by a woman called Viv Albertine. In the late Seventies, she was the guitarist in the all-female group the Slits. They made several records, the most extraordinary of which was released by Y Records in about 1980. There was neither title nor information on the sleeve and the song titles were scrawled at random on the disc's label: you would just put on the record and hope. What you would hear, at its best, was formally appalling but incredibly exciting: on a song like 'Boring Life' — which begins with a muffled giggle — the musicians create their own order out of chaos on the spot. What you hear is people discovering their own power.

'Well,' she asked me, 'why have the Slits been excluded from history? And why are there no women playing instruments now?' The sense of discovery and power that you can hear on the Slits' record is a hard thing to aim for, let alone capture, let alone package. Any structural analysis of the music industry will inform you that a small cartel of five transnational companies has an over two-thirds share of the pop market. Their dominance is furthered by factors like the mechanics of distribution and the high capital investment needed in the new 'video market'. They are, quite understandably, not interested in the deadly, utopian challenge that the Slits' 'armed playground chants' represent.

This sense of discovery is what is missing from today's pop music. Yet blithely to assume that it will return — through some spurious cycle — is to put too much strain on a highly patrolled area of entertainment. Better to see Punk's unfinished business as an autonomy that, once out of the bottle, can never be returned — and one that is applicable, as an attitude, to endeavours other than pop. □

THEATRE

Ploys of sex

Benedict Nightingale

Les Liaisons Dangereuses

CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON *Pit*

Othello

SHAKESPEARE *Barbican*

IS THERE ANYTHING inherently hilarious in the sight and sound of a 14-year-old girl, irresistibly despoiled by a rake two or three times her age, who decides in retrospect she quite likes the experience? To my puritan (and parental) mind, no, not at all. To many of my fellow spectators in the Pit, yes, very. And the moment seemed to emphasise the difficulty, or one particular difficulty, of dramatising **Les Liaisons Dangereuses** for a contemporary audience. What was shocking 200 years ago has become considerably less so in our relatively permissive age. Most theatre-goers would doubtless get properly exercised if the thin line between seduction and rape was crossed — and here perhaps it isn't, quite — but they tend to be tolerant of what used to be called the corruption of minors.

Don't get me wrong. Christopher Hampton has handled all his other problems with great success, starting with the rather obvious one posed by the form of the original. Who would have thought it possible to take a lot of unwieldy French letters, use them with due fidelity to their manufacturer's intentions, and yet beget something fresh and new? But Hampton has the skill and instinct to perform this paradoxical act. Deftly, unforcedly, he brings the protagonists of Laclos' epistolary

novel together and their reportage to life, giving us a play that can boast fluency, momentum, tension, wit, everything except perhaps a certain moral punch and power.

Not that he fails to acknowledge the callousness of the sexual predators at the centre. You might call the Marquise de Merteuil a proto-feminist, given her determination, as she proclaims to the Vicomte de Valmont, to 'dominate your sex and avenge my own'. But since she can't seem to accomplish these ends without victimising or even ruining other women, that label is a bit fanciful. As for the Vicomte, he's a coolly unscrupulous Don Juan, never happier than when he's amusing the Marquise, whose creature he ultimately is, by overcoming the sensual challenges she sets him. Unluckily for him, he commits what she regards as the unforgivable crime of falling rather seriously for the pious bourgeoisie he's obediently besieged, conquered, rejected and emotionally destroyed. So Merteuil engineers his death, and inadvertently her own too. But instead of succumbing to a disfiguring smallpox, as in Laclos, she's guillotined for her cruelties — or so one presumes from the swish and muffled clang that brings the evening to an end.

That's the main liberty Hampton has taken with the original and it strikes me as telling. An act of supernal retribution, the exemplary punishment of an evildoer, has become an act of revolutionary justice, the exemplary punishment of a malicious and scheming aristocrat. It's an emphasis more likely to appeal to a generation which doesn't believe, perhaps cannot believe, that inflicting serious sexual injury is particularly diabolical; but it does of course contain an element of distortion and may help explain the slight want of gravity at the play's core. The frequent humorous touches — Valmont solemnly justifying the presence of a prostitute, whose bare back he's just used as a writing desk, as someone who 'does secretarial duties for me' — are permitted to determine the atmosphere just a bit too thoroughly. The formidable Lindsay Duncan and the equally admirable Alan Rickman, steely and svelte respectively, leave us in no doubt that these erotic sophisticates are bad, very bad; and Juliet Stevenson, pale and stricken, is scarcely less ambiguous when it comes to showing the pain they're capable of giving. But Howard Davies's production does not always recognise the full ugliness of their deeds.

The psychopathology of sex is much in evidence in the big theatre upstairs, too, at least when David Suchet's Iago is onstage. But not until the ending, when he falls distraught on Othello's body and reaches yearningly towards it as he's dragged away, does one see a coherence in what have seemed randomly eccentric moments: his exorbitant anger at finding Cassio, not himself, promoted to lieutenant by the Moor; his evident physical distaste for Desdemona, as well as his own wife; the pitiful wail with which he imagines making Othello 'thank me, love me, reward me'; the dark, private meaning he injects into his denunciation of 'carnal stings' and 'unbitted lusts'; the melancholy emphasis of his 'I am not what I am'.

A homosexual Iago, impelled in his agony to

destroy what he longs to possess, isn't a new reading — Olivier assayed it, opposite Ralph Richardson's perplexed Moor, way back in 1938 — and it isn't an interpretation that fully explains what Coleridge was reduced to calling the character's 'motiveless malignity'. But it adds undeniable fascination to an *Othello* that has improved in several departments since I saw it at Stratford, including the principal one. Ben Kingsley is never going to be the most emotionally electric of Moors, but he's acquired more juice, more force, more attack since last fall, and still cuts a wonderfully (and fittingly) romantic and charismatic figure, glistening in his white robes and headdress: a chivalric amir, jealous of his women, straight from *The Arabian Nights*. □

ART

Slow burn

John Spurling

Ken Kiff: Paintings 1965-85*Serpentine, until 23 February, then Hull and Bristol*

KEN KIFF was 50 last year. Although his has been a name to conjure with in the art world for some years and many much younger artists have shown symptoms of being half-kiffed under his influence, he is not very well known generally. He has had one-man exhibitions in Sussex and Scotland and at his dealers' galleries in New York and London and his work has cropped up here and there in mixed exhibitions; but this retrospective — the Arts Council organisers inexplicably claim that it's not a retrospective, yet what else can a selection from 20 years' work be? — is both overdue and well-timed.

Kiff's style may be in fashion now, but he has been painting like this since the Sixties and will no doubt continue to do so when the fashion has blown over, so that this is a good moment to assess his virtues in a sympathetic atmosphere, rather as William Blake's conviction and originality become still more apparent in the context of his followers' comparative superficiality.

At first encounter Kiff's work seems subjective and self-referential to the point of obsession. The figures are for the most part inchoate, semi-formed homunculi, with large heads, hands, eyes, feet or sexual organs and bodies that serve only to join up or bear these protuberances, in the way that tree-trunks or plant-stems may appear subordinate to their fruit or flowers. The figures are painted into their settings, which are usually landscapes — occasionally streets or interiors — as if they grew directly out of them like the hills, plants, caves and streams. Reptiles, fish and animals grow out of the same settings, but hardly ever birds; indeed, the element of air is curiously absent, for even the skies tend to be dense with colour and the clouds, moon and sun are weighty objects, belonging to earth more than

**'Donkey' (1976) from the radiant brush of Ken Kiff**

space. It is a primitive world, often recalling that of children's art, but not innocent: after the Fall, but also after Freud, Jung, Klee, Picasso and Chagall.

Since these are figurative paintings it is natural enough for the viewer to approach them through their subject-matter, or what can be interpreted as their subject-matter: sexual anxiety, dreams of paradise and nightmares of inadequacy or self-division, the paramourcy of women and psychoanalysts, fear of reptiles, an almost feverish sense of personal disproportion and clumsiness. On the other hand, given such subject-matter, the mood or manner of presenting it is remarkably relaxed and objective, even humorous, as if Kiff were not so much gripped by dreams and obsessions as celebrating his release from them and smiling at their recollected antics.

According to Timothy Hyman's essay in the catalogue, Kiff dislikes being labelled an Expressionist ('Expressionism usually has something hectic about it'), finds abstraction 'subjective in a helpless way' and is equally severe about the contemporary return to figuration which often seems to owe so much to himself:

You see masses of irrational imagery in current painting. Often you feel that the artist is rather at

the mercy of it . . . With what I do the imagery is part of a continuous body. It hasn't rushed in for a quick shout.

There are occasional loud noises and hectic moments in Kiff's work. 'The Poet', firing a pistol at his own temple, sends one eye to join the other in Picassan fashion and carves a red tunnel right through his head, from which emerges a clutch of downcast dream-faces, like evicted tenants or discarded puppets. In 'The Feminine as Generous, Frightening and Serene' a headless torso spouts blood from its neck in four directions and the drawing 'Goddess in the Street' depicts Kali more overtly with her belt of skulls, four arms, vagina dripping blood, knife-like tongue and tongue-like knife.

But these are not typical. Kiff works on many paintings at once, evolving their imagery in series and sometimes over several years. His lyrical, often rhapsodic use of colour and the generous spaces that his colour opens and spreads around the fraught homunculi and their nervous doings are the outward token of this slow, sophisticated process, mingling the shadows and shapelessness of the unconscious with the light and solid form of the conscious. The outcome is a kind of radiant, cartoonish fairytale, Grimm and Calman under the sun of Bonnard. □

DANCE

Twee-step

Stephanie Jordan

Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet

Sadler's Wells

Ellen Cornfield

Laban Centre

THE FUTURE of the theatre from which it derives its name may be uncertain after the abolition of the GLC in April, but the choreography offered by **Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet's** young creative talents displays artistic certainty to the point of dogmatism.

Neither Susan Crow's nor Graham Lustig's first ballets suggest that there is yet a house choreographer bold enough to escape from the relentlessly soubrette image of the company. Indeed, Crow seems to want to indulge the least pleasant tendencies of this body of dancers, characteristics that should have no place in contemporary ballet or, for that matter, the 1980s. The girls are cute and coy, the boys muddle youthful ardour with high camp but, worst of all, there is an irksome flirtatiousness and incessant grinning and grimacing, no doubt upon the misguided insistence of some atavistic rehearsal master. Fourth-form idiocy and stifling RB propriety

is a mixture on which the new generation appears to thrive. And, alas, each season, I see dancers with less ambition than before, small in projection, safe and sound. For that, the choreography and coaching must surely be to blame.

Crow's *Track and Field* is athletics and rivalry between the sexes. This we presume from the reproduction of Degas' 'Young Spartans' printed in the programme and Crow's literal reference to various sporting activities. Tim Shortall's backcloth illustrates the timelessness of athleticism with a figure half Greek bronze, half modern Olympic sprinter, and with a horizontal line, the graph printout of a heartbeat. Dancing to an unsurprising, academic score by David Diamond, Crow's athletes have little vigour or serious commitment. The encounters are jokey and the numerous fidgety sprint passages facetious. A slow middle section for two men and a woman contains some cumbersome lifts, but perhaps these were allusions to wrestling. The piece as a whole looked inaccurately performed.

At least Lustig demanded uncharacteristic movement from his dancers, requiring that they concentrate on motional issues. Inspired by the *Concertino for Harpsichord and Strings* of 1934 by the little known Walter Leigh, Lustig builds his *Caught in Time* on 'the idea of a garden maze filled with living statues', dancers who alternate in motion and frieze. By the last movement the piece has degenerated into the usual pastiche but, until then, it is an attempt to broaden the vocabulary in body

shape and freer use of the torso and to use balletic space in ways unusual for this company, introducing a complexity of simultaneous statement and novel demarcations of territory by lines or chains of dancers. The choreography takes place beneath Fiona Barclay's golden cloud. A plinth in a downstage corner, supporting some crumpled golden wire, makes less sense.

The companion pieces by the more established Michael Corder and David Bintley, *The Wand of Youth* and *Flowers of the Forest*, should have, but do not, set challenging examples to these new company choreographers.

Much more enriching was the good sense of **Ellen Cornfield's** performing and choreography at the Laban Centre. Cornfield, until recently a most vivacious dancer with Merce Cunningham's company, makes reference to her former mentor in clarity, rhythmic subtlety and language. More than he ever did, she has made an issue out of gestural content, arms pressing against the air like fins, or signals with hands or face, often ambiguous references to thoughts or reactions that suddenly emerge from abstract passages. Cornfield's programme needed six other dancers, but her most interesting presentation was her solo *Boxing with Light*, quick-witted choreography showing her dancing to the extremes of an illuminated channel, alert and brave, yet suddenly dissolving into sensuality, disarming. Lucky Laban Centre students to receive the teaching of such an accomplished artist for a whole year.

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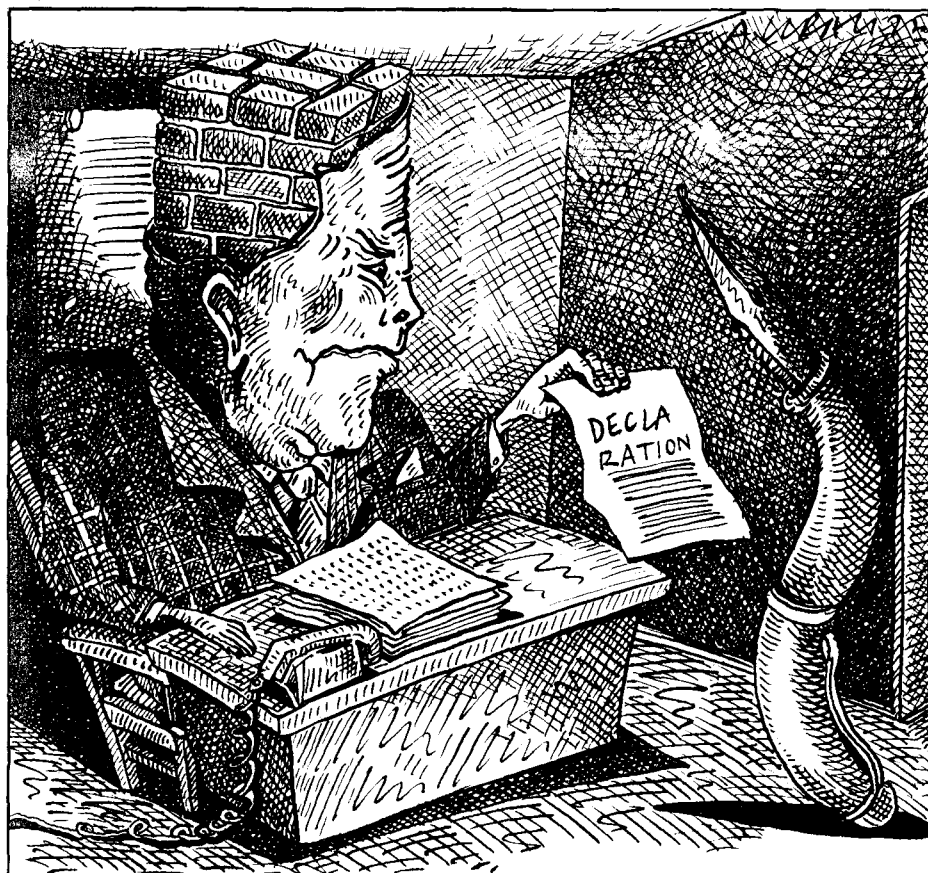
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Make it your business

Alex Stewart

YOU'RE READING this thanks to Maggie Thatcher. No, no, don't throw it away, listen. You don't need to wear gloves to turn the page either, and you may really want to know this. Honest.

The Enterprise Allowance scheme works. And so do I now, and I still find it hard to believe. I'd heard all the horror stories too, you see, the same ones you've heard; how the rules were all written by Joseph Heller clones, so if you really stood a chance of making a living at something creative you were automatically rendered ineligible. But forty quid a week's worth pursuing, and after coping with the DHSS for three years nothing seems impossible. So I wandered into the Jobcentre for a form.

The initial application took half a day, most of it a seminar. They usually begin with a talk by a local businessman, who knows how to avoid all the pitfalls. Things like planning permission ('Sod planning permission — the council can't be bothered processing it anyway'), the Inland Revenue ('Schedule D — think of a number come April') and being overly truthful in filling out the application form. Then it's the turn of the people who run the scheme, who drop heavy hints about what they want to be told so they can give you the money. This was where I started getting

tangled in semantics. There are special requirements for certain occupations you see, among them 'Authors and Artists'.

'But I'm not an author,' I insisted. 'I'm a freelance writer. Authors write novels and textbooks.'

'So what are you going to write then?' they asked.

'I don't know yet,' I said. 'I'll be hustling for hack work. It depends on the market.' The interviewers looked at one another.

'Aren't you going to talk about Art?' they said, pronouncing the capital tentatively. 'Like you're wildly talented, you've won a short story competition in something with an Arts Council grant nobody reads, and if we give you the forty quid you're bound to stroll off with the Booker Prize?'

'Sod Art,' I said. 'I've got the rent to pay.'

'The money's yours,' they said in unison.

OK, so I exaggerate a little. The point I'm trying to make is that it's a *business* enterprise allowance and, unless you can convince them you know the market well enough to make a living, it's pointless even approaching them with something creative. Waffling about novels and Art is a waste of their time and yours; they know you can earn more from a couple of articles in the right magazines than a first novel in hardback, and if they don't they

want you to tell them. It's better to seem overly cynical than a daydreaming dilettante.

Even so, you're still only halfway home. You're about to have a close encounter with the eligibility requirements. Of which nothing needs to be said except that they were written by civil servants.

Luckily you have allies. The Enterprise Office staff find the regulations as irksome as you do; more so probably, they have to put up with them all the time, and their own jobs depend on handing out allowances to as many people as possible. So they'll go out of their way to find ambiguities in the rules and interpret them in your favour. It's a classic example of evolution in action; a mutant strain of bureaucrat, adept at slipping between the lines of the small print and burrowing through loopholes invisible to the naked eye.

So the only real trouble you're likely to have in asking support for a writing career is the one-year rule. Since the allowance is supposed to help you start a business from scratch, the rules say you can't have been self-employed in the occupation you're claiming for at any time in the previous year. A bit of a problem that; no one would seriously consider going freelance without some sort of track record and without some evidence of previous sales they're unlikely to consider you for a grant anyway. Heller lives.

Or maybe not. The key phrases are *self-employed* and *previous year*. Any sales made 'as a hobby' while you held down a regular job may not count. (This one depends on how sympathetic the interviewer is.) In which case all you have to worry about is racking up the three months on the dole you need before you can apply. Either stockpile submissions or do your market research while you're waiting — just be careful how you word it at the interview. And then, of course, there's the crucial difference between the acceptance and appearance of your work. The enterprise agency will happily date your earnings from the acceptance of a piece, so long as you don't remind them most markets pay on publication.

Most of all, listen; not just to what they're saying, but to what they're implying. They can't tell you outright what answers they want, but they'll drop you as many hints as they can.

After this, there's just one more formality: a signed declaration, in tones of the utmost sincerity, that you won't write pornography, religious tracts or political pamphlets while receiving the grant. If you consider this an intolerable assault on your creative freedom, I suppose you can always turn the money down; and I'll look out for *Nympho Nuns of the Kremlin* on the Booker shortlist.

Because when you win that you won't need the Enterprise Allowance, will you? ☐

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Naseem Khan Fame?

WITH *Chorus Line* breaking onto our screens, the myth of discovery and instant fame rolls out again. It's a powerful myth that, alas, does not stand the test of time. Which is why, I suppose, talent shows are themselves both such poignant and such dispiriting things.

Take Talent Incorporated's Search for a Star, for instance: a complex process devised by promoter Flip Fraser that divided black London into various areas with series of heats and finals. At the end of last month the whole elaborate chariot was due to roll up at Acton Town Hall and display the new stars of the future to waiting Londoners. But it wasn't actually like the fairy stories. No glittering stars shot to the sky. In fact, it was probably — for all its idealism — one of the glummiest occasions of my life. 'Come on, put your hands together!' coaxed and badgered the MC, to no avail.

Why such a damp squib? It wasn't the performers' fault; they sang, danced and played their hearts out. The major cause was not of Fraser's making; the council electrician that every outside hiring has to have didn't arrive till an hour before the show. There was no chance, with the complex sound equipment they had, that they'd start on time. But even so, two hours twenty minutes' lateness drew the heart out of a not very large audience.

In retrospect, the wisdom of the whole venture has to be in doubt. Would people turn out in that low post-Christmas pre-new year patch to see performers who had already in August been declared winners? Clearly not. A shame nevertheless, because there was good work to be seen among the winners and the guests — a Rastafarian women's band, Equity; Desmond Johnson's witty dub poetry; and an amazing white man who bravely (and fluently) delivered a stream of rap poetry and was called, I think, Body Prince Charlie. But most impressive of all was the contribution of the Brent Black Music Co-Op.

Vocalists Sheila Cuffey and Anne-Marie Saunders who tied for third place and Lloyd Aaron who was the outright winner are all students at the BBMC, and so is their nine-piece backing group, Blaze. However, the scheme is not centrally about star-making, but about providing a broad accessible service for anyone involved in black music. The large, grey, rambling set of buildings in Willesden High Street contains rehearsal rooms, sophisticated 24-track recording studio, meeting rooms, classrooms and canteen — everything that the young would-be or professional musician could need — and, even more important than that, advice.

The idea — one of those so obvious that you're only surprised it took so long to come about — was born when Leslie Palmer was

invited to a dingy little basement one day off the Harrow Road. There he found around 20 young people rehearsing, among them the remnants of The Cimarrons, one of Britain's most famous reggae bands. Something, Palmer said to himself, had to be done. Palmer's own track record (three years organiser of Notting Hill Carnival, marketing man for Island Records, promoter in his own right) suited him ideally for the task. It was not the enthusiasm that needed developing but the business expertise, experience, nous ('I discovered young black musicians didn't have a clue').

Inevitably it was a long pull from the idea to its establishment, from getting a building to getting funding to do it up. Eventually, after years and £1¼ m., the doors of the BBMC opened officially last July.

Behind those doors, the BBMC offers a range of services. It has 150 young people on its books for the daily classes (a snip at a pound a time). It lays on talks by people in the business, like Steel Pulse's agent and the editor of *New Musical Express*. It has put students in for the Royal School of Music theory exam and taken others to Jamaica to take part in 1984's Reggae Sunsplash. Above all, it is a place where struggling musicians can get good advice. It's a degrading business, says Palmer, totting your tapes and portfolios round arrogant promoters. At the BBMC, musicians would not, he promised, 'be treated as some piece of merchandise'.

All well and good, but who, in these hard times, pays? BBMC's children might flourish — Blaze, for instance, has been asked to be support band for Billy Paul at the Hammersmith Odeon on 17 January — but their launching pad could face hard times. Although Brent local authority is supportive, the project's annual DoE grant expires this year and the demise of the GLC is no help. It is a costly project to administer. Most of its staff are part-timers, on MSC funding, something that has probably affected BBMC's capability to be self-sufficient, a potential weakness that BBMC could do without in a commercial world.

There are two ways in which BBMC could improve their own lot. Firstly, they could maximise the hiring of their recording and rehearsal facilities. Aswad have recorded their last album at BBMC and the co-op is devoutly hoping other groups will notice and follow suit. Secondly, they could harness their own musical talent and indeed are planning just that. In March they plan to produce their first album, *First Cut*: a variety of co-op groups, from Aorthodox to Yeow, playing music from reggae to funk. After that a list of singles and one more album is planned.

The future for an independent label is not a easy one, in a market where vast resources are brought to bear. Palmer however, who is no stranger to that world, is sanguine. 'It is not my intention to compete with Island and so on. I'm not setting up a Motown empire here. The market is big enough to accommodate what we're doing here. What we're building up will be both musically worthy and a decent reputation for good works. I believe we will be heard.'

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams Hot stuff

WHEN COCKNEY pub-duo Chas and Dave wrote their song 'Rabbit Rabbit Rabbit' they occasioned much feminist displeasure at its easy macho assumptions. I don't remember anyone mentioning at the time that rabbiting-on is a cockney rather than a female speciality.

I never realised why I have always instinctively tried not to get tied up over a pint with one of our loveable rhyming slangsters until I hunted up *EastEnders* (BBC1) to find out what all this ratings crowing is about. I hadn't heard such a welter of subordinate clauses since my old headmaster's frantically conditional end-of-term human reproduction rap. In *EastEnders*, the camera is the patient listener we haven't got time to be any more, the old dear in the demolished terrace. Like a successful psychoanalyst, it just sits there waiting for its apparently busy patients to bring their ever-more-ornate periods to a satisfactory conclusion before summoning the next over-burdened citizen into the rabbit hutch.

That this is a fair description of East End life is not in itself enough to win record viewing figures for a soap opera. The other and novel ingredient is the programme's refusal, except in the most notional sense, to be on TV at all. That's right, you don't have to watch it! And not because it's all going to happen again when you're asleep after lunch on Sunday, but because the visual element is non-existent. What *EastEnders* is trying to do is present television as radio, the hottest of Marshall McLuhan's 'hot' media (TV being the coldest) — 'hot' because it requires the public's active engagement in order to exist. Nearly everything in this rather ordinary piece of soap happens elsewhere, like a Greek tragedy — i.e. inside your head. This, clearly, is the reason for the show's popularity: its quality, if any, can be provided by the viewer.

Of course, the show's innate smuttiness may also have something to do with it. Sex also happens elsewhere, either behind closed doors or under cover of the imagination: it is like radio in this sense, a 'hot' medium, which I for one would like to see more of on TV. (Watch out on Wednesdays for *Dead Heat* (BBC2) in this connection.)

What can one say about the 'action' of *EastEnders*? In order not to strain the powers of imagination already being tested by its absenteeism, it offers, like a comic strip, no more than a single exchange in pub or laundromat before moving back again to laundromat or pub, locations which, in soap-hallowed fashion, are populated exclusively by people who know each other intimately, if not sexually. These homely folks do and say what you expect them to do and say, which is reassuring. Hearts are made of gold, etc. Kids have under-age sex for the benefit of middle-aged viewers and parents are shown to be

unfaithful prigs to the satisfaction of younger ones. 'We don't expect happiness from each other,' says a swinging mum to her daughter, 'just each other.' Now ain't that grand?

The only ripple of unorthodoxy in *EastEnders* is its relentless obsession with dogs and dogshit. Perhaps this is put in for the benefit of outsiders, like myself? It seems the show has a slightly unpleasant sub-text of anti-dogism. Or is this a metaphor for the Cockney's endearing all-purpose male chauvinism? 'Don't mind me, I'm only the landlady.' 'No, darlin', you're only the landlord's wife.' Need I say that I am hooked? Or that I am wriggling?

Just as *EastEnders* is trying to shake itself free from the longueurs of Eighties videoese by returning to quickfire Forties radio and innuendo, **The New Babylon** (BBC2), a silent classic made in revolutionary Russia, was trying to burst through the railings of cosy Hollywood storytelling erected by D. W. Griffith into a more kinetic medium.

Proceeding by way of montage rather than scenes, poetry rather than stories and intensity rather than clarity, it gets inside the lives of the workers in a great department store — a microcosm of Paris society — during the Paris Commune of Spring 1871, itself a dress rehearsal for the Russian revolution. The bones of the tragedy are sketched in by the use of quotes: 'Going cheap, going cheap' as the government leaves the workers to the invading Prussians; or 'A gang of thieves, murderers and harlots have seized Paris' — said by the cowardly industrialist of the heroic communards. The film is ravishing to look at and by its obliquity and fine music offers far more than the sum of its parts. It, too, is made in a 'hot' medium, that of silence — which, with its international potential and longevity, might also offer a way forward for British television.

Weekend competition

No 2907 Set by Margaret Rogers

Wanted — to restore a semblance of good manners — euphemisms for politicians to use in the House which, however, make the intended insult clear to all. State who is being addressed. Max. five goes. By 30 January.

No 2904 Set by E. O Parrott

Battle songs for the January sales.

Report By Rosie Hughes

You all did so well, dears, that I feel quite trampled, almost as if I'd spent a week in Oxford Street. My choice of winners is, therefore, to be honest, a trifle arbitrary. Mr Petty is actually reigning Comp. champ., according to that nice Mr Bellenger who sent us the 1985 league table in spite of having himself slipped down into second place. Congratulations, too, to regular winners Basil Ransome-Davies, Stanley J., Peter Norman, Gerard Benson and a special welcome to Katie Mallett (keep it up, chuck, we need more woman power up there), who is closely followed by C. Fever, Russell Lucas and Alison Prince, and lots of the rest of you did ever so nicely, too. Twelve pounds each for this week's winners.

Our eyes have seen what sheer determination can achieve,
No sacrifice is great enough for what our hearts believe,
That's why we've clogged the pavement since they closed on Christmas Eve,
And we'll soon be marching in.
Glory, glory, what a bargain, etc.

We fought at Swan and Edgar in the Home

Colonial days,
Our battle honours boast of Austin Reed's and C&A's,
We're the shock troops of the admass, the consumer's Red Berets,
And we'll soon be marching in.
Glory, glory, etc.

We live but for that moment when the portals are unlocked
To where the special purchases and shop-soiled goods are stocked,
Our hobnailed boots are sharpened and our Barclaycards are cocked
And we'll soon be marching in.
Glory, glory, etc.

NOEL PETTY

Our massacre is over,
Now we're thirsting for another,
Our battle-cry is GRABBIT!
And the enemy, each other.
Through shattered fields of china
To the gory racks of mink.
Our courage will not falter
Though our battered legions shrink.
From our single-minded purpose
We cannot be seduced,
If die we must we'll die beneath
A flag inscribed 'REDUCED'
And go to join our comrades in that shopper's paradise
Where sales go on for ever and everything's half price.

PHILIP A. NICHOLSON

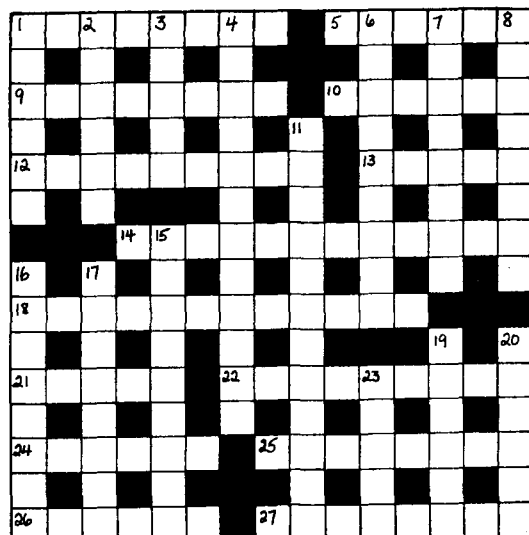
Harrods sale is here again —
Greed, violence and mayhem reign.
Don't hesitate to push and claw
To get what you've been queueing for.
So sally forth with wallets high
Prepared to purchase or to die.
Returning home all money spent
From Harrods first day sales event.

The SAS is here in force
As part of its tough battle course.
To win his badge each man must get
A complete Wedgewood dinner set.

V. MARKER

Weekend Crossword 1505

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1505, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by first post 28 January.



ACROSS

- 1 Revelation is certain after exhibition has taken place (8)
- 5 Sacred texts used by worker in reform movement (6)
- 9 Modern form of erection (8)
- 10 Actor is like a fairy without a place of entertainment (6)
- 12 MP carries a letter about relative means of communication (9)
- 13 Exclamation about everyone returning to God (5)
- 14 One who makes the toss-up a means of acquiring wealth? (12)
- 18 Indicate a fielder going across country (12)
- 21 Something collectable found in a search in antique shops (5)
- 22 Start having income so dissipated so save (9)
- 24 Someone from here would be extraordinarily valiant (6)
- 25 For close links they are worn (8)
- 26 Poet boring to study (6)
- 27 Film people who have their last rest disturbed (8)

DOWN

- 1 Man who shows hesitation over a home (6)
- 2 Such introductions would have no right to appear as works of literature (6)
- 3 Strips when going up to bed (5)
- 4 Ugly beasts but they make the odd one rich in flowers (12)
- 6 Maintain nothing is wrong in being alive (9)
- 7 Confusing sport at back of the net (8)
- 8 The newer hay is scattered all over the place (8)
- 11 Gloom is dispersed in different sites by expert on earthly movements (12)
- 15 Improperly raise cost to drive out (9)
- 16 Spotted a quantity in the conveyance (8)
- 17 Over a score cars are needed by a government department (8)
- 19 Guess we have a meal about six (6)
- 20 Creatures who make wagers without money (6)
- 23 Different so in bed would be worried (5)

SET SQUARE

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MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sunday 19 Jan. 8 pm 'Sevenfold Man'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL. N03.11

THE ARAB CLUB OF BRITAIN ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

The Identity & Modern Technology
Illustrated Lecture by
Dr Mohamed Makiya
Wednesday 22 January at 6.30pm
Lecture Theatre, School of
Oriental and African Studies,
Malet St., London WC1.
Details: 01-920 9359

PURSUIITS

OLD FRIENDS: an introduction agency for the over forties. Loneliness is not inevitable. Details from: Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, London N5 2DB. Tel: 01-226 5432. N49.32

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ATTRACTIVE LAWYER, early 30s, enjoying life, single, fit, kind, affectionate, creative, wide interests, seeks professional man, 30-44, for caring relationship. Central London. Box (03) 2157. N02.31

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LONDON LADY, 32, own career, seeks attractive, non-sexist, emotionally mature male, for committed relationship; children? I'm extremely attractive and affectionate with strong principles (left-wing, CND) and confidence in my abilities. Is there someone who can appreciate a competent female? I have a lot to give if you can. Box (03)2174. NO3.24

LONDON MALE, 40s, University educated, seeks warm, affectionate wife/companion, with high ideals and hopes, like his own. All letters answered. Box (02)2153. NO2.18

MALE, 37, 5' 6", would like to share female company for dining, films, theatre, chat etc. during business visits to London. Box (03)2182. NO3.25

MALE, 40, until recently committed to preserving family unit in otherwise unhappy marriage, seeks female, 30s, with warmth, sensitivity and in need of appreciation. London. Box (03)2191. NO3.26

THE MARRIAGE BUREAU (Heather Jenner), 124 New Bond St, W1. 01-629 9634. Individual attention. NSO.2

MID-FORTIES, GRADUATE woman, attractive, divorced, varied interests including arts and travel, seeks unattached male, 35-55, for friendship/relationship, possibly long-term, Edinburgh (or elsewhere). Box (03)2190. NO3.27

PHILANDERER, ACTIVE, generous, late 50s, married but still philandering, would love to meet younger lady philanderee. Photo please. West/North Yorkshire. Box (03)2156. NO2.32

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WARM, AFFECTIONATE and mutually supportive friendship plus lusty, uninhibited sex, where we are gentle, sensitive, considerate and loving with each other, being looked for by John (36) with new woman friend. Ints walks, dance, cinema, ale/eateries, etc. Informative letter (& photo) please. London area/Surrey. Box (03)2195. NO3.29

WEST YORKSHIRE woman, Jewish, socialist, writer, seeks a relationship with a left-wing, affectionate man (30-40), who is preferably tall and fond of children. Box (03)2201. NO3.31

WOMAN, 29, graduate, lonely, seeks sincere, considerate man, similar age. Birmingham area. Box (03)2193. NO3.32

WOULD YOU be a companion for an intelligent, attractive, Cumbrian widow in her mid forties? She enjoys music, poetry, walking, travel and dining. Box (03)2192. NO3.33

YOUNG FIFTYISH Indian, male lecturer, tee-totaller, non-smoker, tall, well-built, seeks suitable female, fortyish, broad-minded, for friendship/marriage. Photo appreciated. Reply Box (03)2180. NO3.34

YOUR CHOICE — the Introduction Agency with a difference! Your chance to meet new friends/partners through detailed profiles on paper and video. Contact: Jeannie 01-670 9840 or Box (47)1940. N49.23

AGENDA

FOR DETAILS
CALL
DAVID JONES
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MON 20 JAN

BENEATH THE WHITE COAT, seminars on science and politics organised by the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science. This week Brian Easlea, University of Sussex: 'PROBLEMATIC DESIRES AND UNNECESSARY ARMS RACES.' 8.00pm Adam's Arms, Conway Street, London W1 (Tube: Warren Street).

SAT 25 JAN

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST SOCIAL SECURITY CUTS - 'National Conference to Fight Fowler.' Manchester University Students' Union, Oxford Road, Manchester. Speakers: Gordon Brown MP, others to be confirmed. Briefing on Social Security White Paper, Workshops, future strategy, Creche, wheelchair access, accommodation. Contact: Lucy Walker 01-379 6142.

MON 27 JAN

WHAT DOES STAR WARS MEAN FOR EUROPE. A talk by Mary Kaldor at the Architectural Association, 36 Bedford Square, London. 6.30pm. Adm. free. Organised by Book Action for Nuclear Disarmament. Details 01-602 7558.

FORTHCOMING

ART THERAPY DAYS WITH LIESL SILVERSTONE. Spaces on: Sun 16 March; Sun 11 May; Sat 7 June. From 10am-5pm. Cost £20 per day. Maximum no. 7. Info/booking/venue: Liesl Silverstone, 17 Cranbourne Gardens, NW11 0HN. 01-455 8570.

TUES 21 JAN

THE GENERATION GAP — CAN IT BE BRIDGED? 7.00 for 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sqre., WC1. Speakers of all ages from under 18 to over 80. Admission 75p including refreshments at 7. Unemployed free. Progressive League Man/Woman Relationship Group.

WED 22 JAN

FAITH IN THE CITY. St James's Church Piccadilly, 1.05pm. This week: Commander L. Roach, Community Relations Branch, New Scotland Yard. "Order & Law in the Inner Cities." Details 01-734 4511.

SUN 26 JAN

'DON'T ENTERTAIN APARTHEID — SUPPORT THE CULTURAL BOYCOTT'. Public meeting organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and Performers Against Racism, at Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre, Morphet Terrace, London SW1 (off Victoria Street). 3-6pm. Speakers from Performers against Racism, African National Congress, SWAPO of Namibia, SACTU, AAM. Film 'The Hammer and the Anvil'. Stalls, exhibitions, poetry. Refreshments, Creche. Disabled access. More information from: AAM, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 Tel: 01-387 7966.

THURS 23 JAN

PUBLIC MEETING ON PUBLIC ORDER BILL. 7.30pm Holborn Town Hall, High Holborn. Speakers: Clive Soley MP, Labour Law & Order Spokesperson, Sharon Atkins, Chair Labour Party Black Sections, Harry Fletcher, Gen Sec NAPO, and others. Chair: Tony Gifford. Organised by the Campaign for the Right of Assembly & Dissent. Speakers from the floor welcome.

FRI 24 JAN

ATTACK POVERTY NOT THE POOR. Day conference on the Government White Paper on Social Security Reform. 9.30am-4pm. Grosvenor Recreation Centre, Westlink Roundabout, Belfast. Organised by Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action. Tel: 0232 640011.

GREEN POLITICS

An 8 week evening course starting on **Tuesday 28 January, 6-8.45 pm.**

The course will provide a critical examination of the main areas of concern to the Green Movement and offer an appraisal of its policies and proposed political strategies.

Cost: £10 or £5 (unwaged).

Details from: The Secretary, City of London Polytechnic, Old Castle Street, London E1 7NT. Tel. 01-283 1030 extn 541.

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SOCIALIST SOCIETY AGM

Fri 24 Jan — 7.30pm

Round table discussion
Re-alignment for What?
Stuart Hall, Angela Weir, John Palmer, Mary Kaldor.
Chair: Hilary Wainwright.
Visitors 70p; 35p unwaged

Sat 25 Jan — 10am-5pm
Research, Education and Agitation: Policy Making from the Base.
Caroline Benn, Gareth Pierce, Anthony Barnett.
Chair: Anthony Arblaster.

Workshops: Policies for Peace • Full Employment & Democracy • International Aid and Development • Science & Technology • Realist Philosophy & Socialism • Prefigurative Organising • Local Government • Europe.
Creche, disabled access.

Details: Socialist Society, 9 Poland Street, London W1. Tel: 01-734 8501

Save the Children

PROSPECTS FOR AFRICA

Prospects for Africa is a series of six seminars organised by the Save the Children Fund to highlight the development problems facing African governments and identifying future priorities for assistance.

21 January — 6-8pm

The British Government's Contribution

Chair: Peter Jay

Speakers: Rt. Hon. Timothy Raison MP, Minister for Overseas Development; Sir Antony Kershaw MP, Chairman of the House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Admission £5 (for one or more seminars).

At: The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, 12 Great George Street, London SW1.

Booking: Barbara Hewitt, The Save the Children Fund, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD. Tel: 01-703 5400.

MISANTHROPIC MUSINGS : WHAT A SNIP



CHESS

THIS WEEK I propose to investigate an opening variation that is a sort of hybrid between Nimzo-Indian and Queen's Indian. From the outset and on principle, I view White's strategy with some suspicion because it involves incurring those hateful objects, doubled c-pawns. But the line has produced dynamic chess and is likely to become even more popular as a result of its adoption in the Kasparov-Timman exhibition match. It goes like this: **1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 4. Nc3 Bb4 5. Bg5 Bb7 6. e3 h6 7. Bh4 g5 8. Bg3 Ne4.**

Here we may pause to remind ourselves of the sacrificial 9. Nd2, as in the 2nd Kasparov-Timman game (see NS, 3 January). That way White avoids those nasty doubled pawns by giving one of them away. Still, the normal continuation is: **9. Qc2 Bxc3 + 10. bxc3 d6.**

Whoa there! Is this best? There is a strong case for the treatment applied in Gheorghiu-Miles, London 1980: **10... Nxc3 11. hxc3 Nc6** followed by... Qe7 and... 0-0-0, making haste with development and putting the king in what looks to be the least

insecure sector. Vaganian has experimented with **11. fxc3**, hoping that opportunities in the f-file will compensate for the further deterioration of White's pawn-structure. **11. Bd3 f5 12. d5!**

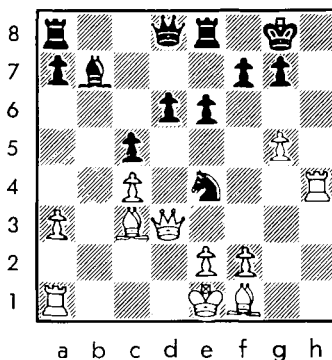
Detonating the centre before Black can consolidate. I don't know if this is good, but since neither **12. 0-0** nor **12. a4** is promising it's almost certainly best. The idea is actually quite an old one, the stem game being Keres-Taimanov, USSR Final 1955: **12... exd5 13. cxd5 Bxd5 14. Nd4 Nd7 15. f3 Nxc3 16. hxc3 Qf6 17. Bxf5 0-0-0 18. Qa4 a5** when White would have been clearly better after **19. g4!** followed by Kf2. A decade later it looked as if the sting had been taken out of White's stab by Ree-Taimanov, 1965, which went **12... Nd7 13. Bxe4 fxe4 14. Qxe4 Qf6 15. 0-0 0-0-0 16. Qxe6 Qxe6 17. dxe6 Nc5** and if anything Black is better, as White's extra pawns are weak and useless. In spite of this, **12. d5** has re-emerged in grandmaster games. So there must be an improvement — probably **12... Nd7 13. Nd4 Ndc5 14. Be2** with f2-f3 to follow, as indeed Keres suggested. Timman preferred **12... Nc5**, and the continuation was: **12... Nc5 13. h4 g4 14. Nd4 Qf6 15. 0-0.**

Now Kasparov-Timman, game 4, developed into a tremendous tussle after **15... Nba6 16. Nxe6 Nxe6 17. Bxf5!? Ng7 18. Bg6 + Kd7 19. f3 Raf8 20. fxc4 Qe7**, when I would have thought Black's piece should be worth more than White's 3 scattered pawns, though the game was drawn in 62 moves after many adventures. Timman then had the unfortunate afterthought that he could do even better in game 6 with **15... Nxd3 16. Qxd3 e5 17. Nxf5 Bc8**. The idea is that after **18. e4 Bxf5 19. exf5 Nd7** Black is nicely placed. But Kasparov was imaginative enough to realize that his knight could retreat: **18. Nd4! exd4 19. cxd4**. This time White has only 2 pawns for the piece, but they are nicely bunched for a central push, whilst Black is alarmingly undeveloped. Kasparov's attack crashed through and nobody is likely to relish defending that position again.

FIDE has given Kasparov a new deadline of 27 January by which to agree to play the return match with Karpov, failing which his title will be forfeit. As Hammersmith Town Hall has already been booked from 9 February, for the first 12 games at least, the British Chess Federation and the GLC are anxiously awaiting Gary's response.

Problem

In this position from Reshevsky-Euwe, Amsterdam 1950 (erroneously given as a case of exemplary defence in some text-books) White continued **18. Rxe4 Bxe4 19. Qxe4 Qxg5** and could do no better than draw. What should he have played?



Solution

18. Qh3 Kf8 19. Bg2! (19. Bxg7+ only draws) Nxc3 (19... Nxc3 20. Bxb7 Rb8 21. Bc6) 20. Rb8 + Kef7 21. Rxe8 + Qxe8 22. Qh4! and wins a piece.
George Botterill

QUIZ

- 1) Who said of whom last week 'His veins are frozen solid with old age'?
- 2) Which 78-year-old Italian author was revealed last week to be about to marry a 31-year-old Spanish woman?
- 3) Who said of whom last week 'I find he's not only a barbarian, but he's flaky'?
- 4) Who is Colonel Gadhafi's favourite composer, as he revealed to American journalists last week?
- 5) Who said of what last week 'It is not something which bothers me personally but I think it was a serious cock-up by the government'?
- 6) Who said last week 'We have a style of great discussion and debate'?
- 7) What job was Malcolm Rifkind appointed to last week?

- 8) What job was Lynda Chalker appointed to last week?
- 9) Which head of state predicted last week that he would win 'a little bit more than a landslide' in a forthcoming election?
- 10) Which country's former Prime Minister, nicknamed 'the old crocodile', went on trial for tax fraud last week?

Answers

- 1) Gadhafi on Reagan; 2) Alberto Moravia; 3) Reagan on Gadhafi; 4) Beethoven; 5) Bob Geldof on his omission from the honours list; 6) Margaret Thatcher; 7) Secretary of State for Scotland; 8) Minister of State, Foreign Office; 9) President Marcos; 10) Belgium

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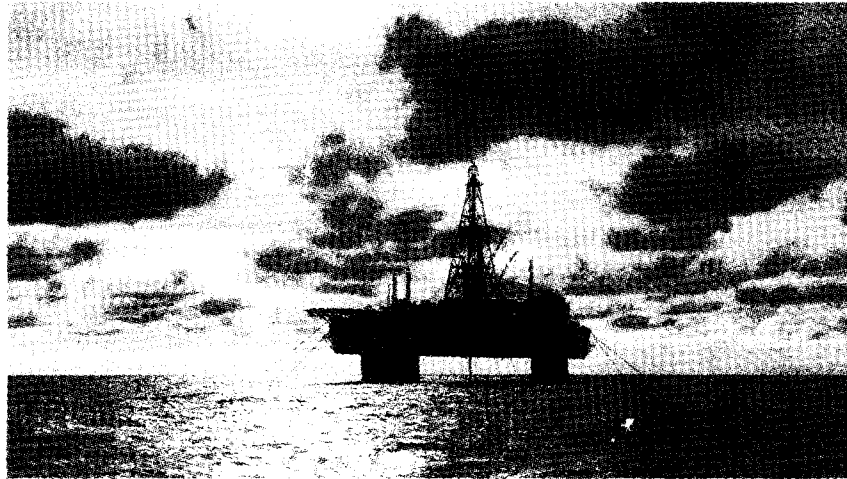
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JOBS AND INDUSTRY

LABOUR MEANS WORK



Labour will get Britain back to work by building a stronger economy — that's the message of the Jobs and Industry Campaign.

Under the Tories, British industry has become weaker than ever before. In 1984 our trade deficit in manufactured goods reached £4 billion. We're being stripped of the technologies and skills we will need to produce the goods and services of the future.

We know there are no easy answers to Britain's decline. But there is a better way forward. **The key is investment** — in skills, know-how and equipment — to build a modern economy.

It won't happen if things are left to the market. Private companies are shifting production and capital overseas — £50,000 million since 1979. Government must intervene — a duty recognised in every other successful economy. Labour will use the power of government as an **enabling** force. To get industry moving. To build on the initiative of working people:

- by working with unions and firms to develop a long-term strategy for key industries;
- by establishing a public presence in key sectors of the future — through public enterprise and joint ventures with the private sector;
- by giving new rights to workers through their unions, to influence key decisions taken in their firms and industries;
- by making sure that national objectives guide decisions taken by major companies and financial institutions;
- by stopping capital outflows, and putting that money into a National Investment Bank to invest in industry;
- by setting up regional enterprise boards to promote the growth of local economies.

And we must invest in the public sector — building up our roads and rail, telecommunications and housing. Labour will invest to build a stronger economy. That's how we'll get Britain back to work. And that's how we'll pay our way as oil revenues run out.

John Smith
Shadow Secretary of State for
Trade and Industry

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Name
Address
Postcode
Return this form to Jobs and Industry
Campaign Team, The Labour Party
Room 106,
150 Walworth Road,
London SE17
1JT

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